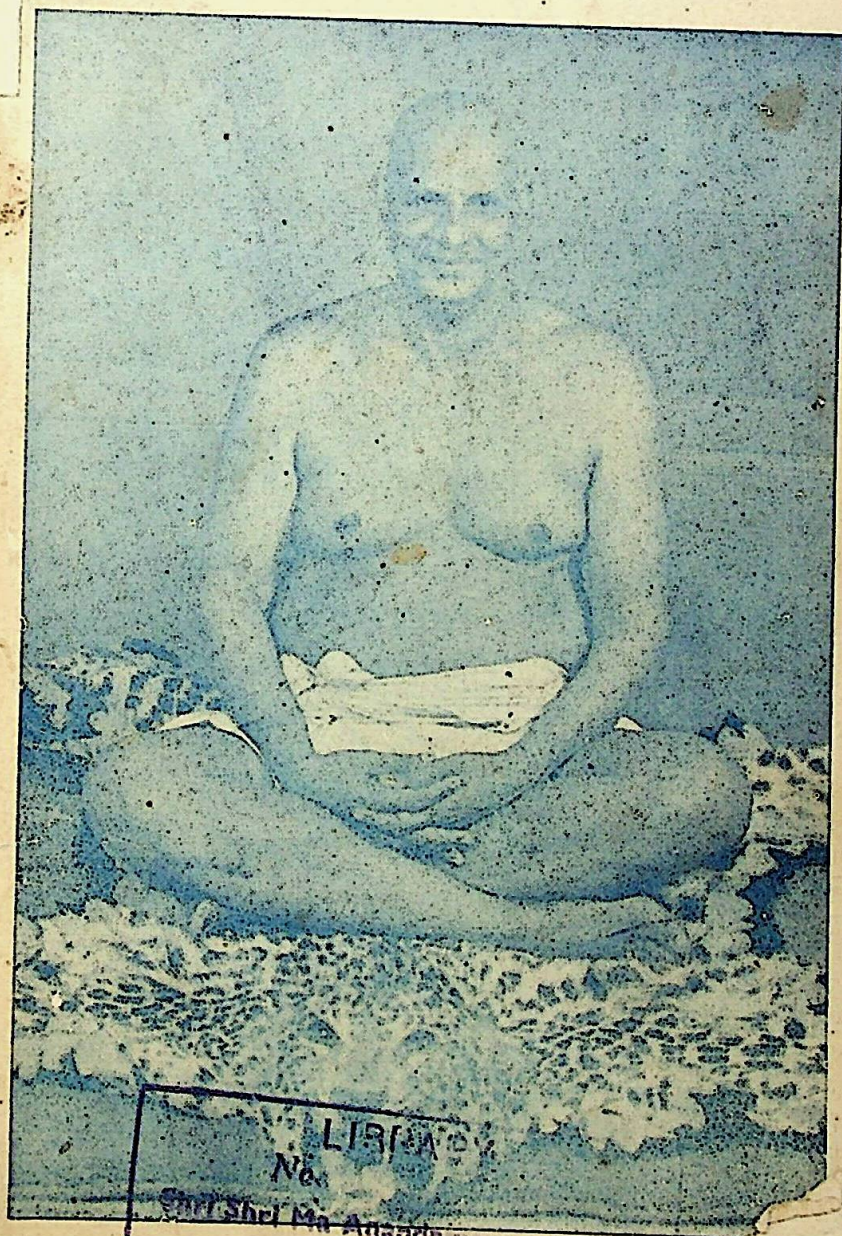


9/45-
SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES



LIBRARY

No.

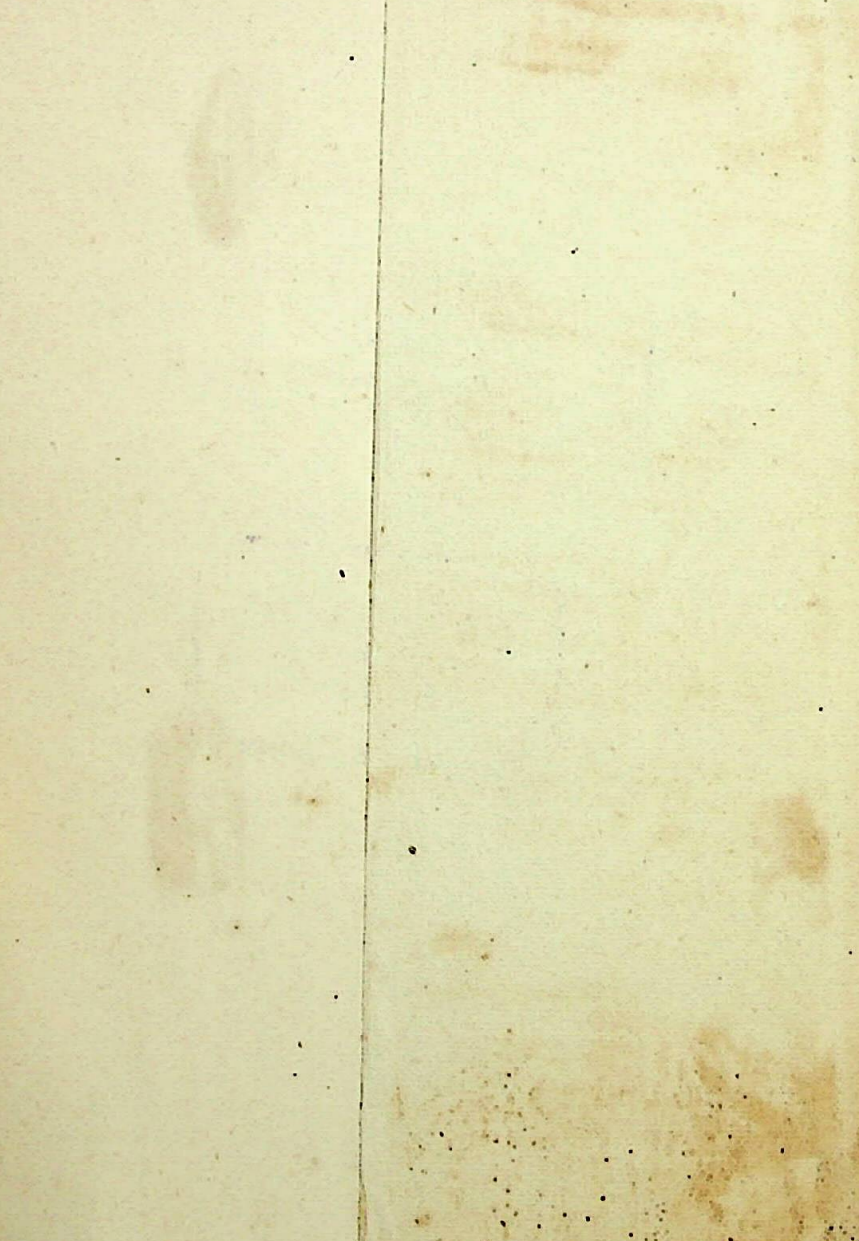
Sri Sri Ma Ananda Ashram
SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA

EXPERIMENTAL

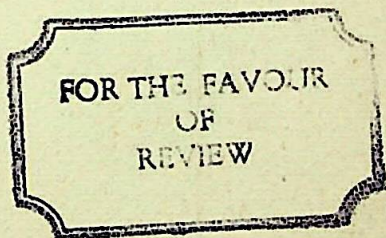
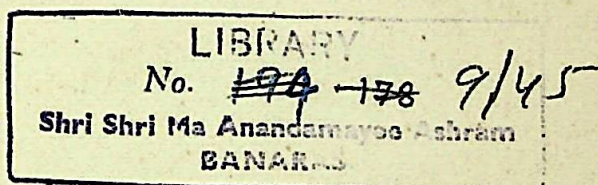
SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES



By
SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA



178





SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES

— AMRITA ANUBHAVA —

By

SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA



Published by
THE YOGA-VEDANTA FOREST UNIVERSITY
P.O. Sivanandanagar, Rishikesh
(Himalayas)

Price]

1957

[Rs. 4

**Published by
Sri Swami Chidananda
for
The Yoga-Vedanta Forest University**

First Impression : 1957

**ALL RIGHTS RESERVED BY
THE DIVINE LIFE TRUST SOCIETY**

**Available from
The Sivananda Publication League,
P.O. Sivanandanagar, Rishikesh, U.P.**

**Printed at
The Y.V. Forest University Press,
P.O. Sivanandanagar [Himalayas].**

9/45

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

Consciousness in common individuals is like an iceberg, only very little exposed to the external world, in the realm of sense-perception, and mostly submerged within the subconscious, concealed inside the depths of astral spheres. The spiritual aspirant devotes himself to the task of exploring and unfolding his inner personality, cultivating the hidden faculties of his perception, until he finally attains the highest state of Self-realisation. In the process of his quest he comes across various types of occult phenomena, and passes through different phases of spiritual development. These experiences have a direct bearing on his mental and physical being and are closely interrelated with his Sadhana,

Spiritual Experiences is a publication that tries to portray the aspirant's perception of the working of his psyche as well as of the forces of the astral world. Self-realisation is the consummation of all experiences and transcends the realm of the mind, and is, therefore, indescribable. Yet, adumbrations have been attempted herein, through the medium of words, to describe the super-sublime state of cosmic consciousness, and of the other preceding phases of occult perception.

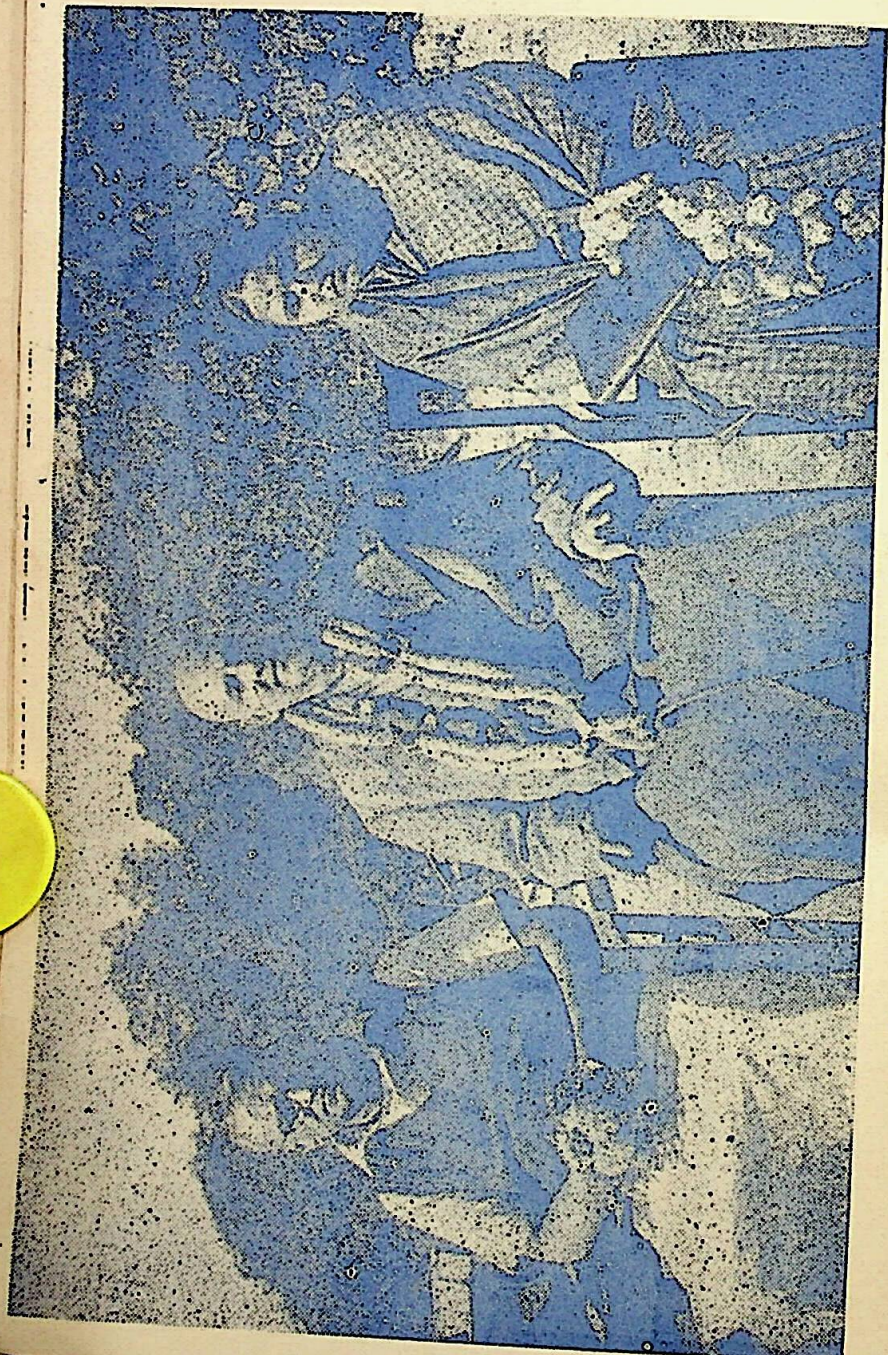
The work has been divided into twelve chapters. The first and second relate to the nature and states of consciousness, and Cosmic

Consciousness, respectively. The third chapter deals with the various experiences that the aspirant has to pass through in the path of Meditation, and in the fourth are continued the different phases of experience found in Samadhi in its various forms and attained through the various paths of Sadhana. Chapters fifth, sixth and seventh discuss the numerous psychic powers attained by the Yogi, while in chapter eight are given the characteristics of spiritual progress. Chapters nine and ten deal with the experiences of the Jnana Yogi and the state of liberation, respectively. In the last two chapters are given the experiences of some of the South Indian and Christian mystics.

The publishers hope that the book will be found useful to all those who tread the spiritual path.

15th January, 1957 The Yoga Vedanta Forest University

9/45-



Mr. and Mrs. M. K. Vellodi with Swamiji Maharaj

SREEMATI KUTTY VELLODI

Pious, devout and noble Sreemati Kutty Vellodi is the wife of Sri M.K. Vellodi, I.C.S., one of the ablest administrators in the country, who has served the nation in various important capacities. With her husband who served for sometime as Deputy Indian High Commissioner in London, Sreemati Vellodi has travelled a lot abroad. She herself has always been a prominent social worker.

By their own glorious example Sri and Sreemati Vellodi prove that faith and devotion, simplicity of life and nobility of bearing, can co-exist with power, position and prestige and they contribute in large measure to success in life and to spiritual evolution. Sri and Sreemati Vellodi have great admiration for H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, and are devoted to his Mission. They enjoy God's Supreme Grace and Sri Gurudev's choicest blessings.

May the Almighty bestow on them health, long life, peace, prosperity and Atma-Jnana !

FOREWORD

There are no words adequate enough to express my feelings on the treasures contained in this latest book by H. H. Sri Swami Sivananda.

I have never read or imagined that there could be a comprehensive book where such rare and practical expression of the personal experiences could be so clearly described. I have no hesitation whatsoever in saying that we are lucky to be born at an age where we have a Divine personality to guide us—a personality the like of whom does not exist in the world.

It is our good fortune to see the Lord in human form and read his Divine works.

This superb work containing this superhuman set of experiences is not and cannot be found elsewhere.

The Divine seems to have given Himself entirely to Siva—only because our Siva, the only Siva in the present world, gave himself without reserve and in all his parts to the Divine. For him, the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the height of knowledge and flood-gate of joy is entirely God's own.

"The bliss, immortality, eternity, truth and Divine love became his own a long time ago."

A. N. Sharma
Major-General

श्री शिवानन्दाष्टकम्

(Sri Swami Bhagavatānanda)

अचिन्त्यशक्तिमहिमा अज्ञानध्वात्तमास्करः ।

अप्पट्टयकुलरत्नं मे शिवानन्दः प्रसीदतात् ॥१॥

आनन्दाख्यकुटीरस्थो आर्तरक्षणतत्परः ।

आश्चर्यकृत्यशीलो मे शिवानन्दः प्रसीदतात् ॥२॥

इष्टानिष्टसमः पूज्यः भक्ताभीष्टफलप्रदः ।

इन्दीवराभनेत्रो मे शिवानन्दः प्रसीदतात् ॥३॥

ईश्वर्यकारणैरधनः ईषरिमतमुखांबुजः ।

ईप्सितार्थप्रदाता मे शिवानन्दः प्रसीदतात् ॥४॥

उत्कृष्टकीर्तिविख्यातः उत्कृष्टज्ञानशेवधिः ।

उत्कृष्टगतिदाता मे शिवानन्दः प्रसीदतात् ॥५॥

एकान्तभक्तिगम्योऽयं एषणात्रयनाशकः ।

एकानेकस्वरूपो मे शिवानन्दः प्रसीदतात् ॥६॥

ऐश्वर्यमददर्पघ्नः ऐक्यश्रुतिपदाश्रयः ।

ऐश्वर्यज्ञानदायी मे शिवानन्दः प्रसीदतात् ॥७॥

ॐ कारार्थस्वरूपोऽयं ॐ कारध्वनिघोषितः ।

ॐ कारार्थस्वक्ता मे शिवानन्दः प्रसीदतात् ॥८॥

शिवानन्दाष्टकमिदं प्रार्थनारूपमद्भुतम् ।

यः पठेत् शृणुयादित्यं सीऽचरान्मुक्तिमाप्नुयात् ॥

ANAHATA SABDA YOGA

The Divine Anahata Sabda is ever present within every living being. Patient practice will enable the Yogi to listen to this Inner Voice. This is generally done by sitting in a comfortable Asan and at the end of some Kirtan, Japa and meditation upon the Lord's form, when the mind is thus tuned to the Infinite and all other disturbing waves of thoughts upon the objective world outside are stilled, the Sadhak closes his ears with his thumbs and with closed eyes diverts his entire attention to his heart and listens—poised in extreme alert awareness. Here, listening does not mean an attempt to hear a sound by an instrument other than itself.

Success is assured when concentration is sufficient. A pure mind and intellect alone gains concentration. The purification of mind and intellect is achieved through regular and daily Kirtan, Japa and Dhyān, Satsang and Nishkama Karma.

—Swami Sivananda

DISCOMFORT DURING MEDITATION EXPLAINED

(Sri Swami Sivananda)

If an aspirant feels some discomfort during meditation, it is always physical, and never otherwise. The numbness that he feels, the jerks that he experiences, the ticklishness that he feels in the back and even the fears that he may have that he might not come back to the worldly consciousness again are one and all merely of the flesh, fleshy. Into a poor man's thatched mud hut if the royal elephant were to enter, certainly there must be some noisy shatterings. A mortal frame, equipped to house low animalisms, in its circumscribed limitations may find it difficult all at once to hold and contain within itself the mighty grandeur of the Divine Presence. Hence the nervous twistings and muscle tremblings. The body is getting adjusted to hold on together to the new vibrations of Divine Potency that are now generated in the bosom of the seeker. Never mind or worry over these physical adjustments. Whenever you feel the numbness in the locked-up hands, untie them and massage each arm with the other palm all the while not stirring from your Asan nor opening your eyes. You may shift the pose of the hands to a position wherein they recline from the elbow down upon the thighs.

Please do not worry over the fact that you will not come back to the ordinary consciousness. No intelligent disciple will ever worry over such a problem so long as he has faith in and devotion to his Guru.

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES

Balls of white lights, coloured lights
Sun, stars, during meditation
Divya Gandha, Divya taste,
Vision of the Lord in the dream,
Extraordinary, super-human experience,
Vision of the Lord in the human form,—
Sometime appearing in the form of a Brahmin,
Or old man, leper, outcaste in rags,—
Talking to the Lord,
Are the preliminary spiritual experiences.
Then comes cosmic consciousness or Savikalpa
Samadhi
Which Arjuna experienced.
Eventually the aspirant enters
Into Nirvikalpa Samadhi,
Wherein there is neither seer nor seen,
Wherein one sees nothing, hears nothing,
Wherein one becomes one with the Eternal.

SONG OF SADHANA

I

(Thars : Sunaja)

Seetaram Seetaram Seetaram Bol
Radheshyam Radheshyam Radheshyam Bol.
Sadhana is steadyng the mind and fixing it on the
Lord.

It gives freedom, bliss, peace and immortality.
Friends! Plod on patiently like the farmer at his
plough,

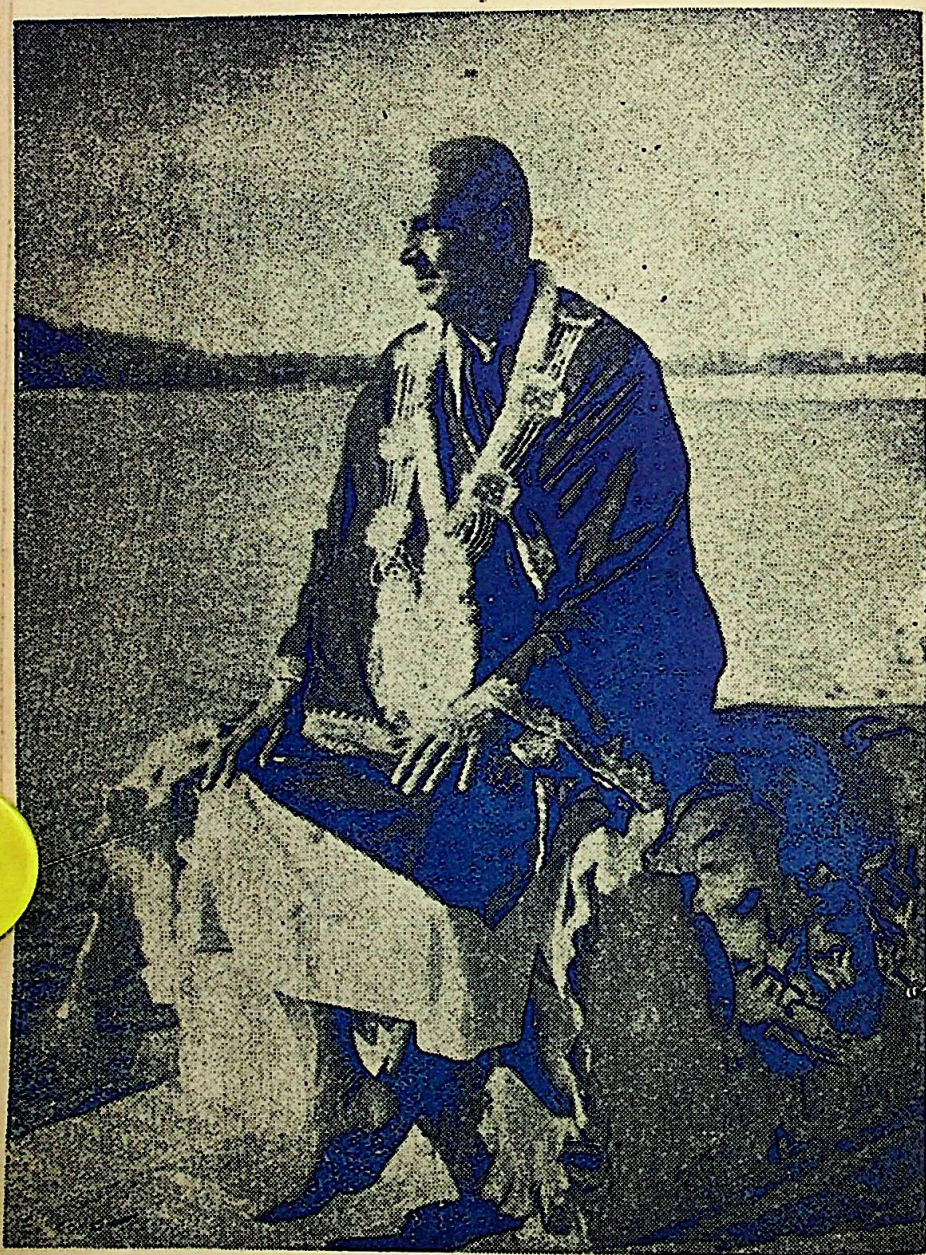
Be persevering, be steady in your daily Sadhana.
Destroy Tandri, Alasya and building castles in the
air,

Take light food and drive off sleepiness.
Be regular in your Japa, Kirtan and meditation,
Regularity in Sadhana is of paramount importance.
Just as you separate the pith from the Munja grass,
Separate this Atma from the five Koshas.
Peace, cheerfulness, contentment and fearlessness
Indicate that you are advancing in the spiritual path.

II

Purification, concentration, reflection, meditation,
Illumination, identification, absorption, salvation.
Inspiration, illumination, revelation
Rapture, ecstasy, vision of Truth
These are the experiences in meditation.





H. H. SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA

SAT-GURU SIVANANDA

By

Sri R. Viswanathan, B.A., B.T.
Editor, '*Champion*',
Calicut.

STATE OF NEW YORK

IN SENATE,

JANUARY 1, 1901.

REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Swami Sivananda's name is well-known to spiritual aspirants the world over. His manifold services to all classes of people irrespective of nationality or religion have been already recorded vividly and gratefully in the large number of books on the many aspects of his divine life and mission, written by eminent Bhaktas. This monograph is a simple addition to those but may not be treated on that account as superfluous for a great reason. Truth is one and bears any amount of repetitions. These only add to its glory and emphasise the need for its correct grasp and practice. Swami Sivananda is nothing if not Truth in human shape and form. To study his life and attempt to imbibe its lessons is a great spiritual Sadhana. It has benefited me considerably and it is only my earnest desire to share the gains with all that has prompted me to write this book.

It was by sheer Divine Grace that I first read an article by Swamiji in a newspaper. That writing cheered me at a time when I needed such cheer. It almost seemed that Swamiji was speaking to me in flesh and blood. That was five years ago. Since then I have read and attempted to study most of the books written on and by Swamiji. I have also been blessed by many personal letters written by Swamiji. These have always been my friend, guide and Guru. I have often wondered why he should take such great

Interest in me... a negligible unit from all ordinary standards. I discovered soon that this is the identical view which everyone of Swamiji's vast circle of devotees and students holds. That is indeed deeply significant.

I have so far not had the unique privilege of meeting Swamiji—Nor do I consider it wholly necessary for my purpose—much as I would covet the opportunity. All the facts dealt with here have been collected from other biographers, those who have spent some time with him and from Swamiji's own writings. I do not know if I have unconsciously failed to do proper justice to any one aspect of Swamiji's life. If I have erred that way I beg the readers to excuse me. With these thoughts I place this very humble tribute at the feet of my Master and the large number of devotees and the general public. If it serves to arouse the thought of even a single reader in the direction of Divine Life I shall consider my little labour amply rewarded.

Sivananda Maharaj Ki-Jai-OM Tat Sat.

R. Viswanathan.

Calicut,]

13.2.50]

PREFACE

"Having known Me as the disinterested friend of all living beings, My devotee attains supreme Peace."—Gita.

Swami Sivananda is a unique type of a Sannyasin whose intense love to humanity continues in a highly sublimated and divinised form. A perfect 'Jeevanmukta,' his irrepressible love and compassion ever seek to raise the ignorant and suffering people, that they may live truly in joy and bliss. In a world seething with a multitude of sins practised and even glorified by "men of culture" this self-imposed task of the Swamiji seems colossal. He is nevertheless absolutely undaunted and I, for one, shall not be surprised if his intense faith and great work prove more formidable and ultimately vanquish the forces of evil in all its varied manifestation. Such achievements in the past have been recorded in world-history and those responsible for the mighty acts with different nomenclatures as Sri Rama, Sri Krishna, Buddha, Christ, and Mohammad at different periods in the history of humanity, vouch for the inexplicable and transcendental scheme whereby the one without a second fulfils Himself. The conditions for God's descent upon the earth to restore the equilibrium whenever the forces of evil sorely afflict the people, as promised in the Gita are more 'perfect' today than perhaps at any time in the past. The world therefore eagerly awaits the

deliverer. Here he is in flesh and blood already at the task, in the holy atmosphere of Rishikesh apparently away from crowded multitudes but in a more effective and real sense preparing the ground for the mental and spiritual transformation of mankind so vitally needed in the abnormal and vicious atmosphere that prevails. That is Swami Sivananda and his Mission. Nothing less but possibly very much more which a poor intelligence like the one I possess, cannot comprehend with its obvious limitations.

SAT GURU SIVANANDA

Birth and Early Life

Sri Appayya Dikshitar is a highly honoured and familiar name in Hindu Religion and Philosophy for his numerous, great and masterly works and treatises on Hindu Vedas and Shastras. That Swamiji took his descent in the illustrious family of Appayya is a significant fact. He was no solitary flower blossomed on an arid rock, but was the unique product of conditions and circumstances in which spiritualism had long been nurtured. Nor do such favourable auspices develop by accident. Remembrance of God and faith in religion and saints are only vouchsafed to those who have through the continuous processes of 'life and death' made special and sustained efforts. It was therefore quite appropriate that Swamiji took his birth in the line of Appayya as a son of P. S. Venguliyer and Paravathi Ammal, two worthy and pious souls of Pattamadai in Tinnevely District (S. India). Little perhaps did the blessed parents realise when they first had vision of this child on September 8, 1887 that he had come to achieve great things not for one family or one place alone but for the whole humanity all the world over. Swamiji was born when the star 'Bharani' was in the ascendent. There is a Tamil saying to the effect that "One born in Bharani will rule Dharani (universe)". The star by itself is considered so

propitious and in the present instance, has more than justified the astrological belief in the real sense.

The parents of P.V. Kuppuswami by which name the child was known had a comfortable and religious life. The boy had all the care and attention of the living parents and joined the school early. Extremely intelligent, well-behaved and wise, he quickly attracted the attention and love of his tutors at school. He had a strong physique and beautiful features and was conspicuous figure not only in the classroom and play-ground but in the school theatre. His pleasing voice gave rich vent to the inherent musical traits—an accomplishment which the Swamiji effectively harnessed to his latter spiritual Sadhanas and Sankirtan.

Passing with distinction, the Matriculation Examination, he joined the S.P.G. College, Trichinopoly (S. India) where the Principal and Professors were deeply impressed with his abilities, character and innate goodness. The college course finished, Kuppuswami joined the medical line, the latent urge for serving and helping people unknowingly making this choice for him. His intense interest to equip himself with a thorough knowledge of medical subjects amazed his professors to whom he soon became more a colleague to be respected than a mere student. Kuppuswami set up practice at Trichinopoly as an efficient and well-equipped doctor. For three years he edited a medical journal whose publication in those days was considered a great boon both to the profession and the public.

To the Malaya States

A change of environment and fuller life awaited him at the Federated Malaya States whither he proceeded to take up job in a public hospital. It was during this period that the human and spiritual traits in him manifested in acts of sympathy, kindness and love towards everyone who chanced to come into contact with him. As a professional doctor his success was beyond all calculations. Patients rushed to him at all hours of the day and night and found him always ready and eager to minister to their wants. He had a kind word for everyone. His loving talks to even the lowest or the more seriously affected at once restored their self-confidence and provided quick relief. During this period money flowed into his coffers, all unasked which the doctor gave back, all in the shape of various charities and helps to the needy. Every day and every night was to the doctor so much addition to his spiritual store amassed by service to the sick, needy and the poor. Innumerable were his acts of goodness and charity and the unostentatious self-sacrifices recorded in this period of his life. It is easy for a rich man to appear 'charitable' but in the majority of such apparent goodness, the motive is found to be fame or relief to the unhappiness felt at the sight of suffering; but Kuppuswami even in those early days went out of his way to find people who were in any trouble and was restless until the man in trouble was fully relieved. What a glorious trait! Christ-like, this

young man of charm and abilities who could easily have amassed a big fortune and led a happy material life, felt deeply miserable at the sufferings of others and took upon himself with voluntary zeal, the task of relieving those as best he could. His purse was open to all needy people and his skilled body was a public instrument. No wonder he became highly popular and was loved by one and all.

Studies and Reflections

Amidst a sea of activities, professional and social, the doctor yet found time to equip himself with more intimate knowledge of the problems of life and death. A profound scholar of Tamil and English literature already, he began to intensify his knowledge of Sanskrit. Religious and philosophic study attracted and charmed him and he steadily added to his huge library of books on these subjects. Another potential past-time of Kuppaswami in those days was the practice of Sankirtan and the occasional "Harikatha" performances he gave on religious themes. His music had improved a good deal as a result of his study and practice of the science and art. This attracted to him large numbers of devotional people eager to participate in Bhajan. His child-like simplicity, keen sense of humour and willingness to put up with all personal inconveniences made him the hero at all gatherings, professional, social or devotional. Thus far the activities of this youth had unconsciously, been based upon the hidden forces in

him which were soon to sprout with force and vehemence.

The Breaking of the Bond

The call came to the Doctor at Malaya, the mysterious, irresistible, call to renounce the world of the common conception in order to find the life eternal, the mystic summons for which is served to the chosen and select few, the adepts who are ordained to cry halt to a world drifting along the perilous path of doom and destruction. It found Kuppuswami equal to the occasion. There was no consideration or weighing of pros and cons. That way is not made future deliverers of mankind. It was a plunge, reckless one may call it but a plunge in which the inner being of the individual sought with tremendous earnestness to break asunder the chains with which it was bound all these years. The conflict for a trice, it may be imagined, was terrible. The forces of worldly life with all its attraction for a pure youth, eminently successful on the threshold of a career full of brilliant possibilities and material glory battled with the tremendous urge in our hero to sacrifice and renounce all that he had earned and cherished so far with a view to break the bond. It was a crucial moment and a weaker heart might have stayed to weigh the possibilities. Not so, the future spiritual Guru of the world, the doughty son of Appayya Dikshitar's family. To him the issue lent itself to easy solution. Sivananda the Teacher was taking birth in Malaya and the event was of vital significance to millions of people all the world over who

were to be swayed and moulded by the deep spiritual influences in the years to come. The decision was taken irrevocably and the popular doctor of Malaya was in quest of the highest pinnacles of an immortal life of cloudless bliss. He gave up all—all that he had so far gathered, at a moment's notice and was fast speeding to his own "Punya Bhumi" to seek the truth even as Lord Buddha did in days of yore.

Crossing the Bridge

Swamiji's life thus far was a silent preparation to cross the bridge of life. It is given only to a chosen few to achieve this distinction. The majority tarry on the bridge and often take a reverse move. Inexorable are the workings of Prakriti or Maya. Man often sees the bridge and the way but is unwilling or afraid to cross it. His Samskaras and senses drag him in the opposite direction. These have weakened his thought, misdirected the vision of his love and made his will subservient to the resulting drift. "Samsara-sagaras" are created and the whirlpools of mundane miseries and sufferings deeply dug for daily dips. Man has all the powers in him to become one with God even as Sivananda had. He has too, what is called a Free Will but when the powers are misused the Free Will gets handicapped and is after a time completely submerged. We must take heed therefore in time and take to the fulfilment of life while the opportunity still lies before us. Dr. Kuppuswamy could easily have emulated the vast majority of mankind and carried on his professional

activities and thus accumulated vastly to his material assets. Only an adamant will to face any sort of consequences and any kind of suffering could overcome the mental conflict. Those great qualities Swamiji had in abundance. 'Friends' and 'well-wishers' persuaded him to revise his decision. They painted lurid pictures of his future. It was inevitable for 'friends' and 'well-wishers' to preach 'wisdom' as they knew and practised it, to our hero, on the eve of his breaking the bond. Fiery was his determination that the importunities left him unaffected. Something assured him that he was casting off the gross and ugly, a necessary condition for the descent of the subtle and beautiful. As yet his satisfaction was only negative. In the succeeding chapters we shall see how the vague and undefined ideas slowly crystallised and made him a tower of light and strength.

Kuppuswami reached Madras early in 1923. A box containing cash and dress, a bedding and a few other articles were with him. All the rest he left back at Malaya or distributed among the poor and the needy. Healthy and robust of body, his mind was restless. His future was a sealed book, only a vague premonition lent hope and succour to his, as yet, undefined aspirations. Any thought of his life so far with all the great chances which he had deliberately thrown to the winds, added to the poignancy of the present and the fears of the future. The great aspirations however goaded him to stick to his resolution with greater tenacity. He was a wanderer in quest of truth and the life divine and

nothing could stop him reach his destination. Often people are faced with similar conflicts, of less consequence, where the forces represented are the spiritual urge on one side and the physical environments on the other. In most cases the latter have their way and thereby we forge fetters on ourselves which drag us down perceptibly or otherwise. If we but take care to ruthlessly put down tendencies and decisions which we know are bad, but which we acquiesce in, just to put ourselves easy with physical environments, material considerations and the like, we shall be slowly and steadily preparing ourselves for the full life. Even that however can be only passive preparation. Kuppuswami's was an active and very aggressive leap in the dark to enjoy the light eternal.

The luggage which stood between him and absolute physical freedom irked him and he decided to get rid of it on reaching Madras. He had a poor friend there and decided to surprise him with the gift. His nobility prevented him announcing the gift which he left in his friend's care when he instructed to make use of, freely, whatever he wanted.

In Quest of God

Kuppuswami started for Benaras, the holy city of 'Viswanatha'. One more step had been taken in his long journey. Ineffable joy was invisibly sprouting in him. His vision of life and the world was being transformed. Nature accosted this child to see and understand her in true colours. The statement that we see things not as they are, but as

we are is a truism. The same phenomenon or set of circumstances are reacted to differently by the man of the world, the scientist and the politician. Each can only be at best a partial truth. The full truth cannot be perceived or understood until the individuality of the 'preception' is merged with the cosmic life and thus totally annihilated as a separate entity with likes and prejudices. To arrive at this great stage requires careful application of our intellects together with a consciousness of their limitations. This naturally leads one to complete self-surrender to God—not an inactive passive state as many seem to think but an energetic active state of detachment. It was this psychological transformation in Kuppuswami which was taking place at this period inevitably leading him to spiritual grandeur. He had already paid the price for the great consummation to get ripe at the proper time. That we have to pay a price for anything we desire to get is understood commercially by everyone. Spiritual 'commodities' have also their prices but these are not calculated in terms of rupees, annas and pies

Wanderings

We now come to an important phase of Sivananda's march on. A wandering itinerant's life is resorted to by all seekers of truth at a particular stage. It is a period of absolute self-surrender of body and mind to be directed and moulded at His own will uninterrupted by egoistic schemes and calculations. Immense spiritual benefits accrue to

the aspirant during this period through apparent suffering and obstacles. It is really these latter which even in common everyday life quieten the outgoing senses and create an atmosphere for self-discovery. The history of all great men in the world is the story of their continuous struggles and tribulations endured in calm spirit and the drawing out of their inexhaustible inner powers to transcend and solve the difficult circumstances and environments. Sivananda longed to visit holy shrines and sites in order to intensify his communion with God. He visited many such, often trekking long distances with scarcely anything to eat or drink. The bodily needs, food, rest etc. were denied rigorously and often unconsciously in the intensity of the desire to reach the goal. Sleeping on road-side, exposed to all sorts of weather, eating dry bread and drinking cold water at times of sore need, Sivananda visited Puri, Jagannath and other centres of the North, Rameswaram, Tiruvannamalai and Pondichery in the South, besides numerous other places. During these sojourns his mind was deeply meditating on the great truths of life. For a time he stayed amidst the beautiful surroundings of Dhalaj, a village on the banks of Chandrabhaga. It happened in this way. As he reached the place and sat for his first meditation in a selected spot, his feelings acquired pose and poise and he wished to stay on in the place longer. He made no other calculation but immediately, the postmaster of the place, a good-natured, religious man, was found to accost him—drawn by

His will—and request him to stay in the place for some time! We call it an 'accident'—anything inexplicable and beyond the grasp of our meagre intellect, we dismiss as trivial accident—but even accidents have definite causes, not certainly beyond the range of His plan. Seeker Sivananda's little desire was being granted. For four months he carried on his concentration and meditation and earned lasting benefits. Still he was journeying and His will prompted our hero to go away from that spot. It was a wrench for the poor post-peon of the place when Sivananda left the place. Often he had shampooed the sore feet of the peon after his daily fatiguing rounds. What a sympathetic heart.

At Rishikesh

The first of June 1928 was a memorable day in the life of Sivananda. That day he set foot on the holy soil of Rishikesh. The place enraptured him. He felt a strange exhilaration. The lofty Himalayas and the sparkling waters of the Ganges, had a mystic effect upon his heart. They seemed to him the eternal parents to whose loving bosom he had gone for permanent stay and comfort. The Hindu heart is instinctively moved at the very mention of the names of 'Himavan' and 'Ganga'. Hindu religion and mythology are replete with stories of the glorious parts which Gods, saints and sages have played through the ages on the peaks of the mountains and on the banks of the Ganges. This truth has been experienced by even casual visitors to the holy spot. The atmosphere, vibrant with

the spiritual currents of numberless Tapaswins, shook Sivananda, the moment he set foot on the spot. A new life, a new strength was his and he sang and danced as never before. It was a historic and significant moment in the life of the saint—no less than thousands all over, like this writer, whose lives he was soon to shape. As he surveyed the scenery around, the singing of the birds, the 'Omkaradhwani' of Ganga and the livering Himalayas—all drew him to crystallise in part the mighty things he was to do and achieve in the years to come.

Initiation

A few days passed, days of intense prayer, spiritual study, Sadhanas and Sankirtans. Early morning one day while Sivananda was preparing to do Japa, after a dip in the holy Ganges, a bearded, venerable looking sage appeared before him. Deeply impressed with the piety and spiritual eagerness in Sivananda, the visitor offered to initiate him in the Holy order. For Sivananda, it was a human manifestation of God come to satisfy his spiritual thirst and longing. Viswananda of Banaras belonging to the Sringeri Mutt and Paramahansa order, a great Tapaswi, was this Guru. As if he was prompted by some great force, this Swami Volunteered to initiate Sivananda in the order of Sannyasins. After the usual rites and a short ceremony, the ochre garb was presented to our hero in due solemnity. He was named Swami Sivananda Saraswati.

The Guru occupies a very high place in Hindu spiritual and religious life. He is verily, God's

representative on earth, the father and mother in one, and a philosopher, guide and friend. The feeling of absolute oneness which the pupils and the Guru mutually entertain, is a beautiful consummation of divine life. The meeting with a Guru, is itself the result of God's grace and of one's own spiritual efforts. A Guru is indispensable to raise the aspirant and guide him through the many portals represented in the different stages of the evolutionary process. One has not to search for a Guru. The latter meets the aspirant at the most appropriate time as it happened in the case of Swami Sivananda.

Pattamadai to Rishikesh

Let us now take a brief survey of the various stages in the life of our hero—his march from Pattamadai at the far end of the country in the South to the northernmost part of India, at the foot of the mighty Himalayas. It was really a life of poetic grandeur and spiritual fervour, an extraordinary flowering up of all the finest trends latent in the child at the very birth, brought about by careful and deliberate planning and blessed by the unseen powers. The lives of all sages and saints have at all periods presented sharp thorns. To tread this path in order to stunt the painful effects, master their psychology and thereby possess the necessary equipment for raising the human species is no easy task. It is given only to Dheeras and blessed souls. Kuppuswami the village youth, the school pupil, the college student, the medical practitioner, the wandering mendicant and the Paramahansa

Sannyasin, possessed an individuality characterised by the most sublime qualities all throughout. He was at first vaguely and later on, clearly conscious of the great mission which awaited him and was ever preparing himself in all his little thoughts and acts. The 'sudden call' that came to him at Malaya was so only apparently. Beneath it lay years of mental and spiritual preparation slowly and steadily gained. A 'Dheera' every inch of him, a true preceptor of life and its many-sided problems, Sivananda, throughout the long period never lost sight of his ideals and the Goal. He was not lost in the attractions of the way-side, very formidable as these often were. Thus from the path of material pursuit Swamiji turned with alacrity to the spiritual one. He was set on the first stone on the journey in his new Ashram which meant the leaving behind of a world of myriad objects of sense attractions which have in their grip the entire human race with singular exceptions typified by Gurudev. From here it was yet another long journey to scale the heights of spiritual realisation and every step here too had to be tread warily. The chapters hereafter will explain how Gurudev ascended the summit to occupy the unique position he now does—"Emperor among emperors, richest among the rich, Freest among the free."

Tapascharya

Higher up the Ganges Swamiji selected a proper place for his stay and meditation three miles from Rishikesh, 'Lakshman Jhula'—the spot where Sri Rama

and Lakshman, according to tradition did Tapas after the killing of Ravana and in pursuance of Guru Vasishtha's advice. There were a good number of Kutias along this bank of the Ganges and numerous Sadhus occupied these. The 'Sadhus' are a class of people who wander about holy places and live on public charity. Ostensibly they lead a simple and hard life and the enforced asceticism and leisure are calculated to make them God-conscious. In a real sense they are supposed to live in a spirit of absolute self-surrender which in its highest aspect is potent enough to carry them to the pinnacles of spiritual glory and bliss. That many Sadhus are found to take to it as a profession to lead a care-free and idle life is no fault of the order in which one finds very many good souls in constant remembrance of God. The Sadhus of Lakshmanajhula attracted the attention of the Swamiji. He was always in readiness to serve them. Service was ever his proud badge and any little opportunity to practise it could never be missed by him. Inactivity and denial of service was to him poignant starvation for the soul whose discovery and careful nurturing was his highest ambition. Of this truly divine aspect of Swamiji's life we shall discuss in a separate chapter.

He was a friend, philosopher and guide to the Sadhus of Lakshmanajhula and Rishikesh. He attended to their comforts in a variety of ways.

Charitable Dispensary

The 'physical doctor' in Si vananda—how often

was he to be pressed to serve, to treat the various bodily ailments to which the poor Sadhus fell victims. The spiritual and physical "doctoring" was a unique pleasure for Swamiji. The need for a regular dispensary to treat the increasing number of Sadhus who resorted to Swamiji's help at all hours of the day and night began to be felt keenly. Swamiji was reminded of a matured insurance policy he possessed and contacted the people concerned to cash the same. He had quite forgotten this asset along with the many he had left behind. The new circumstances at Lakshmanajhula persuaded him to avail the benefit. Thus the Satya Seva Ashram Charitable Dispensary came to be established and hundreds of patients found it a great boon with such a great soul in charge of it ministering to all with more than missionary zeal. During Swamiji's early days at the place, he lived in a dark open Kutia but soon the authorities in charge of the charities provided him with a comfortable Kutia quite near the Ganges. He was also given special rich food every day which however he entirely reserved for more needy unhealthy Sadhus, himself being content with little things at irregular intervals. Swamiji also engaged himself rigorously in the practice of Yoga Asans, Pranayamas, Japas and study besides Bhajan and Sankirtans. He was steadily piling up his spiritual stocks. The Sadhus of the place found in him an ennobling kindly leader. Often he called them together for Bhajans or talks in spiritual subjects. Pilgrims in scores bound

for Badrinath and other places received reverential attention at the dispensary.

Swamiji got up early at 3 A.M. (a practice which he has continued up to the present day) and the still atmosphere of the Himalayan Valley only interrupted by the sweet flowing of the Ganges, reverberated with 'Aum' Namah Sivaya, Aum Sivoham, Aum Namo Narayanaya and other names of the Lord, followed often by Bhajan songs. It was the signal for Sadhus in the different Kutias in the entire area to prepare to get up and greet the dawn after their Brahmamuhurta prayers and meditation. He took a holy bath in the Ganges, neither the chillness of the weather nor the icy water the least affecting him. The meditation and prayers continued till about nine in the morning when he got out to visit sick patients and treat them. This occupied him for the next four or five hours and he then went to the choultry to take his portion of the food which again he distributed among the more needy, himself just taking small morsels with water. The afternoon found him busy meditating or recording precious thoughts on odd bits of paper he collected from all sources. The evening bath over, he continued his Japa and meditation. Often he collected the Sadhus on the banks of the river and gave them short and inspiring talks. Bhajans, repetition of names and Mahamantras etc. were other programmes at the congregation. He kept on singing and chanting in a loud voice long after the Sadhus had retired for their night's rest. Thus he spent two

years into which he compressed centuries of spiritual Sadhana and equipment. The mighty spiritual volcano was being generated in the silent and holy atmosphere of Rishikesh by the side of the Ganges and at the foot of the Himalayas.

Tapas in Solitude

Let us follow Swamiji in his intense Tapas carried on in virtual solitude for the six years following. Reader, kindly mark the length of the different periods during which he amassed the invaluable spiritual wealth. For a man who does not properly appreciate and understand the deep implications of such a wonderful life of service, activity and meditation, the mere recording of the various phases of living becomes an effort. The vast majority of humanity might not have even the patience to read through the grand achievements of such a full and divine life. Imagine then how, day after day, hour after hour, this mighty Guru shaped himself, first to be in tune with nature and later to transcend her limitations and finally to show the beacon light to those struggling in the mire. Jeevanmukta that he is in the truest sense, he is still an ocean of compassion and is deeply moved by the sufferings of the 'least' of God's creations. So he toils with absolute faith and detachment and lives in bliss and peace eternal.

The period of Tapascharya was continued with alacrity and fervour. When the unruly senses are subdued by prolonged practice, when the imperfect intellect discovers its own vagaries and limitations

—in short when the ego-sense is totally annihilated, there arises in the still deep chambers of the heart power which comprehends all, in its true perspective—such comprehension of truth in all its varied aspects and apparent differences is hard to attain. The means for its attainment have been laid by our ancient sages and seers to suit different types of temperaments and tastes. Yet how few tread the path—nor perhaps are they entirely to blame. The inexorable eternal law often guides people according to their past Samskaras with strictest exactitude. This is no hopeless doctrine. On the other hand it is full of hope and bliss here and now as Swami Sivananda's life and teachings undoubtedly demonstrate. There is also a very widely prevalent mistaking of the means for the end. The means have undoubtedly their important place and function but in themselves can never be the end. This is especially true in spiritual and religious matters. Swami Sivananda's Tapas in solitude was only the means to the great end. He wanted to see God face to face and did see Him as and whenever he wanted, wherever and in whatever form he chose. Sivananda's mission did not end there. He wanted the humblest, poorest man to rise to those heights and is ever goading us on. May his efforts be crowned with glory—Aum Tat Sat.

Pilgrimages

The next few years saw Swamiji's going on pilgrimages to holy shrines and places. The significance of these visits vastly differ from his

earlier visits to Banaras and other centres immediately following his great renunciation. The spiritual barometer in Sivananda had since the earlier visits vastly shot up. He was no more in quest of God. He was actually in the vision of God filled with bliss and peace. The vague comprehensions of the early years had grown to be realities and there was no more room for doubt, fear or indecision. There is a vast deal of difference between a beginner of little or no faith visiting a temple or shrine and an Appayya Diskhitar or Sivananda doing the same. In the former case it is all that is understood in religion or spirituality while in the latter, it is the result of an experience of inexplicable charm and continuing utility. Often it is as a precept to the neophyte whose understanding and appreciation of the great subject just in the making whose faith has to be slowly and carefully built through discipline born of time-honoured and well-defined acts and practices.

Sivananda visited Kedarnath, Badrinath, Tungnath and other holy centres. He trakked the mountainous path to Kailas and bathed in Manasarowar. Ganga Sagar, Brindavan, Rameshwar, were a few more of the many other places he visited during this period. Often he was accompanied by other Sadhus and Sannyasins. He lived in God-consciousness and was scarcely aware of anything else. The normal difficulties and tribulations which one meets with in such journeys were to Sivananda spiritual experiences and highly

pleasurable. That is a vital difference betwixt a life of material pursuits and one lived in the Divine. Every difficulty, small or big which a man of the world confronts and which often throws him off the balance, is a valuable opportunity for the spiritual man to add to his stock.

Beginning of the Mision

During this period and the year following — roughly betwixt 1930 and '40 — Siva started his great spiritual campaign by giving most exhilarating talks and discourses on religious and spiritual subjects. His big audiences in Bengal, Bihar, Punjab, United Provinces and Andhra were taken by storm. Eloquent and impressive, the mighty force in the Swamiji expressed itself in a language and style which could not fail to inspire the casual hearer. Possessed of a musical voice and pleasing gestures the lecturer in Siva held the audience spell-bound. The spiritual volcano was bursting in India and the effects of the mighty happening was bound to sweep the country from end to end. Often Siva captivated thousands with his sweet Bhajan, music and demonstration of Yoga Asanas and Pranayama. The youths to whom ordinarily subjects of Religion and philosophy are unattractive flocked to his gatherings in their thousands. Everyone felt that a new messiah had arrived with a great purpose and that his message needed to be understood and practised. Every type of aspirant of whatever intellectual attainment found in Siva's lead a particular emphasis on the one method which he

(the former) seemed most fitted to follow. This is perhaps the greatest single contribution which Gurudev made in his intense campaign. He did not demarcate particular means and hold it up to people as the only safe and sure one for them to follow with advantage.

The spiritual spark was latent in every individual and in the process of lighting it Swamiji employed a thousand means according to different tastes and temperaments.

The Divine Life Society

A momentous step of universal significance was launched in the year 1936 when Swamiji founded the Divine Life Society. An organisation designed to disseminate spiritual knowledge, the Society in the succeeding years has grown from strength to strength and had now innumerable branches throughout India and in many centres of Europe and Africa. The universal character of Religion and Philosophy is the key-note of the activities of these branches. The last word on the subject is as yet the Vedanta philosophy of India but Swamiji has clearly shown in his many-sided inspiring teachings how this is not only not incompatible with the teachings of every other religion in the world but that each one of these takes into account the vital sublime truths of spiritual problems. The end in all cases is one and there is a fundamental unity underlying their apparent diversity. These latter are so on account of special conditions and environments suited to different people, and are not a result of any difference or con-

flict in fundamentals. The modern world with its steep advance in the field of physical sciences is to an equal degree away from moral and spiritual values. The shifting of emphasis on material considerations has unconsciously dragged humanity to the vortex of mutual destruction and painful consequences. The worst animal passions have been sought to be indulged in with scarcely one thought of their inherent suicidal aspects. In the name of civilisation, culture and often religion man has descended to the lowest depths of degradation and enduring misery. Political power and prestige have had not an inconsiderable part in vile enactment of the drama of death and desolation. Verily man has deliberately left his moorings and the accumulated sins of violence and untruth keep the vicious circle ever revolving perilously dragging the world to world-war No. III with its threat of atomic death and disintegration. As I averred earlier, the conditions for the descent and manifestation of God on earth have at no time before been so favourable and perfect in all details.

Happily for the world the embers of spiritual glow have not all been totally extinguished and Swami Sivananda has appeared on the scene to gather and light them in a mighty conflagration which will sweep every grim prospect with scientific precision and ruthlessness. That way will be paved the effulgence of the beautiful world of tomorrow. That there be no mistake about it, no doubt or scepticism, no denial on the authority of intellectual

jugglery. The world has had a surfeit of such performances and momentary satisfactions only to be quickly hurled again and again in the deepest abysses of sorrow and suffering.

It is the consummation of the Mahatmas and similar efforts at human redemption that Swami Sivananda is ceaselessly toiling to achieve by different means demanded by the times. I predict that the torch lighted by the Divine Life Society and its world-wide branches will in good time achieve the great ideal in view—Rama Rajya in the true sense of the word. Harken therefore ye people of India and the world put your shoulders to the wheel that the glorious end may be achieved here and now.

The Headquarters

The Divine Life Society has within its fold members of both sexes and belonging to different religious denominations and nationalities. The Headquarters of the Society at Rishikesh now comprise many big buildings and small from where the various activities of the Society are directed by great Bhaktas and devotees fully competent and entirely dedicated to the cause and mission. Besides a large number of workers at the big Ashram, people visit the place from all places in India for stay; they are taught the different spiritual practices as Yoga Asana, Pranayana, etc., besides the benefit of regular study, concentration and meditation on Vedanta philosophy in all its aspects. A free Primary School, charitable dispensary, spiritual library,

Annakshetra, (feeding house) are other institutions attached to the Headquarters. The Yoga-Vedanta Forest University Press prints and the Sivananda publication League publishes a large number of books by Swamiji and others. Leaflets are also printed and distributed in their thousands. There are a large number of preachers who give talks and educate the visitors on spiritual and religious subjects. Films, lantern slides and gramophone records are also used as aids monthly journals printed and published by the Society, has during the last fifteen years become an international medium by disseminating the spiritual culture. Several illuminating articles and instructive poems from the pen of the Swamiji are contained in each issue of the journal. During the last few years the magazine has been printed and published in several Indian vernaculars in different parts of the country. A forest University on the model of the ancient Gurukula system is also functioning. Expert professors on Yoga, Vedanta and allied subjects are in charge of a good number of pupils and the work has been progressing from strength to strength under the guidance and supervision of Swamiji. The Forest University publishes a Weekly journal containing its programme and work as also a variety of useful articles. A membership supplement is sent free to all members of the Society on the 15th of every month. This contains contributions mainly from the pen of Swamiji.

All World Religions' Federation

A very big and significant step was taken by Swamiji when he founded the All-World Religions' Federation in the year 1945. The primary object was to bring into one compass members belonging to the different Religions in the world. It is indeed a sad commentary on the cultural progress' of the last century or so that of and on the religious frenzy of different groups has been aroused by ignorant or mischievous leaders to achieve petty and selfish objects. Since man is essentially a religious being, this trick of misdirecting his enthusiasm into wrong channels has more often than not, met with considerable success. The victims of such sacriligious lead have always been those with vague and undeveloped ideas of religion and God.

True religion can be—ought to be—in the smallest acts, in speech, manners, gestures, in all dealings in life and this has to be realised and acted upon by every man who would place any value at all on religion. Such a grand purpose was certainly envisaged by all religious prophets, sages and teachers.

Swami Sivananda has realised the value and importance of ridding all religions of their dirty accretions. This is best done by showing the essential unity of their purpose and ideals. In founding the All World Religions' Federation the Swamiji had this supreme end in view. The annual sessions of this Federation held in different parts of the country have contributed much to the fostering

of the spirit of understanding and tolerance amongst members belonging to the different religions.

We, in India have the greatest opportunity of achieving this unifying process of religions. Our traditions and religious heritage are still with us although only lip-sympathy has been paid to it for the last many decades. We should preserve our heritage and show the others—erring brothers—how irreligious have been their acts in the name of God and religion. Swamiji's mission just now stands the greatest chance of welding the people to the one great ideal and true purpose in life.

All World Sadhus Federation

The All World Sadhus Federation was founded by Swamiji in 1947. This organization is intended to bring together all those pious good souls, the world over, who have dedicated their entire lives to the service of God on earth. They are indeed a very happy lot and in the pursuit of God-realization have cleared all earthly moorings and thereby wiped their slates, clean of all the Samskaras they had earned through previous lives. Concerted work by this organization for leading aright their less fortunate brethren still wallowing in fears, doubts and sufferings, is bound to have tremendous effects. This Federation is a counterpart to the move for the unity of all Religions too, and is bound to eliminate all needless and destructive habits and wrong ambitions which alluded to in the last chapter. The dynamic spread of spiritual forces has all through

been the great ideal of Swamiji and his keen insight into the psychology of people never missed the least opportunity of furthering the cause at all levels and under all circumstances.

Other methods of keeping aflame the spiritual torch are the activities of the Divine Nataka Sabha which put on boards, plays and stories of deep religious significance. The actors in these are chosen and trained by Swamiji himself who is a great adept in the art. Often the Swamiji himself takes important roles and thrills the audience with his sweet music and superb acting. The Bhajan Hall at the Viswanatha Mandir always radiates spiritual vibrations and the reader would be pleasantly astounded to be informed that a non-stop Akhand Bhajan performance has been going on there for the last over four years, at all hours of the day and night. This is a unique achievement in the history of the world and has its great lessons for all. Writing on prayer Gandhiji laid down that if it were possible for man he should spend every moment of his life in actual communion with God but that "we erring mortals do not find it possible even to do so for a little time and therefore fix definite hours for prayer morning and evening." Here that dream is actually realized at Rishikesh where, since 1943, groups of people are at a mighty superhuman task. That Bhajan will in due time engulf the whole world in a continuous process of cleansing and mental purification so necessary for the descent of the spiritual force.

Yoga Museum

The Sivananda Yoga museum is located in a big hall and presents pictorial representations of Yoga in its varied aspects. It is verily a visual treat and gives correct ideas of the many Yogic practices designed to instil in the aspirants the necessary physical and mental health for the practice of Yoga. Swamiji who is an adept in these practices through which he himself has gained robust health personally attends to the various activities in this regard. Yoga—union with God is achieved through various practices and each of these is important for the aspirant. Differences in inclinations, temperaments and other factors fit particular aspirants better for one branch than for others and a wise choice makes the task much easier than otherwise. The guidance of a Guru is indispensable in this regard also and Swamiji beckons to one and all to take full advantage of his readiness at all times to lead. It will be a real loss if such a great offer is not taken full advantage of by everyone concerned.

Members and Branches

The Divine life Society has a large number of members attached to the work and mission in all parts of India and countries in Europe and Africa. These members keep in touch with the headquarters and closely follow its programme and mould their own lives and activities under direction. Branches of the society have also been formed in many centres and these carry on spiritual services in all possible ways

useful and beneficial to the people of the locality. The periodical reports of the activities of these branches published in the Divine Life journal show already substantial progress affecting lakhs of people. Some of these branches are quite miniatures of the parent organization and engage themselves in all the details of the programme as chalked out by the headquarters from time to time. Spiritual talks and discourses by eminent persons, organization of free medical aid to the poor and the needy, feeding of the poor on occasions, conducting classes for the study of Sanskrit and spiritual subjects are some of the regular activities of the branches. Provincial conferences of the Branches are also held annually which are utilised to chalk out more and permanent work of the society to spread the great message of Gurudev to a large number of people. Thus a net-work of Branches steadily carry on the spiritual activities and bring within their influence larger sections of people belonging to all religions and sects.

Swamiji's Writings

We now come to what may perhaps be described as the most important phase in the work of Swami Sivananda. He is writer *par excellence* and the great secret of this success is that his life and thoughts are excellent too. Sivananda simply records all his thoughts and experiences without the least mincing or exaggeration and the production is scintillating wisdom and truth. He writes as it comes to him, naturally and without the least effort. An adept of

human psychology, Swamiji touches the innermost heart with a sentence or word. His is a flowing and easy style and the subject matter is clothed in language which appears to different people as the one specially liked and understood by them. There is intimate sublimity running through which undoubtedly is the language of intuitional emotion. As the intellectual perceptions are emphasised by the intuition Swamiji has no need to search for words or revise his writings and these he never does. The words and style are decided for the Swamiji by the occasion and the class of readers for whom they are intended. He often writes for children in their own wonderful innocence and quickly grips their interest. The neophyte has his problems analysed and solved for him in understandable language interspersed with numerous illustrations of the many difficulties he actually encounters and correct advice as to how best to tackle them. The rank atheist finds in Swamiji's arguments enough material to confront and pulverise the rocks of his unbelief in a trice. The intellectual argumentators are quietly shown the limitations of their knowledge and the need for their depending upon a greater force to lead them. The common hypocrisies met with in half-baked spiritualists are ruthlessly exposed in the keen torch-light of the Swamiji. To the seeker after truth unbiassed by prejudices and predilections he presents several means of raising himself along the ladder of spiritualism. An Advaitic philosopher of Sankara's school the Swamiji nevertheless appreciates

the limited vision of other schools of thought and belief and other religions and helps them see further light to reach the very godhead. This is a unique force and quality rarely found in spiritual leaders anywhere. The usual practice, may be for good reasons, is to demolish the arguments on which differing beliefs are reared by counter-arguments calculated to expose the weaknesses of the one and thereby to glorify the other. Swamiji's methods are entirely different. His psychological reach is so deep that it penetrates the 'why', 'how' and 'wherefore' of any spiritual theory and thereby fully appreciates every other point of view. He then shows their failings and weaknesses as a true teacher and father and thus puts his own views for acceptance after thorough conviction. He is a friend of the orthodox Brahmins clinging to ritualisms without any mental or spiritual advancement or clear aim. He puts before them the true utility and original intentions of these practices and thereby shows how the husk is mistaken for the grain. He is a lover of scientific progress but disapproves how this is wrongly conceived and harnessed to heinous ends. He shows how material sciences have always the tendency to drag people from off the right track, how spiritual sciences are more exact and vastly superior as regards their powers to better mankind permanently. Such a variety of subjects such conglomeration of difficulties and evils, Swamiji solves with ease in the large number of books written by him. All conceivable problems have been

dealt in these writings. Every man, whatever his previous convictions or prejudices, whatever his position and status in life, whatever difficulties which confront him, will find in Swamiji's writings enough material and practical advice to alter and shape the life to be in tune with the Divine purpose. The Divinity, in short which represents the Swamiji and his mission is so powerful and all-embracing that it sheds its edifying lustre in all places, in all shades and thereby provide the one pole-star to which alone man ought to direct his steps for perennial bliss, immortal life and absolute freedom.

Swamiji's Books

Swami Sivananda's prolific writings fill the columns of many journals in India to which he contributes regularly. The subjects chosen are light or serious, strictly spiritual or mundane, but whatever it be, the one underlying purpose is to make the reader search himself and look at problems in life in their truthful and full perspective and thereby attune thought, will and life to the one and only purpose for which every man as a true heir to immortality and bliss has manifested on earth—the true purpose of God-realisation. The history of the world has run its dark and fearful course through ages occasionally illumined and relieved by the presence of such great souls from time to time. But for this redeeming feature the world would have become more miserable than what we see it.

Swamiji's writings have so far been published in over a hundred and fifty books. Many of these are

original works and deal with subjects like the 'Mind Its Mysteries and Control' which elude objective study and analysis since the object and subject are hardly distinguishable. Yet the subject is dealt at length and very profitably for the readers to prepare themselves for the ascent. I have referred to the book at random for every other book of Swamiji handles difficult subjects and reduces them to the shape easily understood and mastered by the reader. His commentaries on the Upanishads, Gita, Brahma Sutras and similar teachings are masterpieces. Swamiji uses the dramatic form in his writings with great effects. The simple, conversational teachings in appropriate backgrounds appeal to the heart of the reader. His poems are a class in themselves. Their greatest rule is merit and unfailing instruction and illumination. For practical utility, clear understanding and never-fading colour these books are unique. Deeply versed in the rare teachings of Hindu religion, and philosophy Swamiji has an equally thorough knowledge of other systems of thought, philosophy and religions. He had dived through the corners to the inner chambers and purpose of the different teachings and has found them having a common origin and purpose. It is these that Swamiji wants the world to grasp and realise. Once that is done by a good number of people, this monkey world can be changed overnight to a great paradise. Selfishness and fear can be replaced by love and courage and many an evil result wiped out thereby. It would be productive of

great and quick results if every individual decides to read these books and understand and practise their teachings. They can with the greatest advantage be introduced for study in our educational institutions and private libraries. It will indeed be a great 'Jnana Yajna' for ridding the world of all impurities and thereby make it purely Satwik. I have read and reviewed most of the books written by Swamiji in the columns of my journal "The Champion" (Calicut), in detail. I have been greatly benefited by a perusal of these at length.

Sivananda as Guru and Teacher

In the foregoing chapters, I have tried to place before the reader, a connected account of the life and activities of the Swamiji during the last four decades and more. These have indeed caused sprouting of spiritual waves in various parts of the world. Swamiji is still very much dissatisfied—that is in a worldly sense—at the inadequacy of the work done and is highly impatient to spread the message further and quicker. He is at this formidable task every moment and uses every little opportunity to achieve results.

His mission, may I reiterate, is the redemption of humanity from the vortex of blind materialism which has enveloped it. This may seem very ambitious on its face. To Swamiji there is nothing impractical and impossible. His function is just to lift the veil which clouds our vision that we may develop the latent powers in us. Every human being has the divine spark in him but in most of us,

hidden in accumulated filth. The problem is how best to wipe the accretions. This can well be done only through the guidance of a Guru. To anyone who has the least desire to walk on the divine path Swamiji can safely be adopted as the loving Guru and great teacher. You may feel nervous in approaching him at first but even the very first contact in person or through post is sure to wipe your fear and doubt and instil hope and a new spirit in you. Of this there is absolutely no doubt. It is easily verified by one and all. You might have studied that a Guru is not so cheaply obtained and that he is found only as a result of past good acts. Yes, you read these lines only as a sequel to your good acts and your fitness to enter the spiritual path. Else you would perhaps be reading a cheap newspaper or novel of stunts and stupidity. If you feel like writing to Swamiji on your good wishes of becoming a member of the Divine Life Society or in any other way contacting him, then you are indeed blessed. You are quite ripe for initiation at the hands of your chosen and ordained Guru. Try if you want—even if your faith is for the moment weak—and you will have quick results which will transform your life and make you feel really happy. This is no vain statement but a repetition of experiences of thousands of his large circle of devotees. He is a unique Guru, as he straight takes you under his fostering care and guidance whatever be your present qualifications to tread the divine path. Swamiji has given the go-by to all

formality in his deep compassion for the average man. He does not stand at a distance and put you on 'fitness trials' for long. He proceeds with his work straight irrespective of what his overzealousness might make you feel. He is too big and loving to bother with these petty considerations. He will expect you to follow all his advice but if you fail or only take to it in part, still he will goad you on the right track and ere long you become quite a changed man. His powers are irresistible and put you on your true mettle even on the start. He is a real Gita-man and like Sri Krishna condescends to guide and help not alone one high soul Arjuna, but every man irrespective of all other consideration but pure love and service given 'unilaterally'. As a Guru and Teacher therefore Sivananda is perfect and should you decide to quite follow all his instructions, will make you perfect also. Sivananda is indeed the modern world teacher with all the ancient wisdom in him and the common belief amongst a good many of his devotees that he is an Avatar of 'Sankara' is not quite wide of the mark. Let the reader understand that these are no empty words of exaggeration or hero-worship. Such scepticism in matters relating the spirit and brought about by the jugglery of the intellect or the monkeying nature or the mind has all along been the strongest lure of mundane life pulling us ever down. The bane for such big rise as every man is capable of, has long continued to be disbelief, doubt and adherence to a sense of false prestige. Bury these,—

your constant enemies—take refuge in the great Guru and teacher Sivananda, and thereby tread the path of spiritual glory ever and anon. May the blessings of Swamiji be on us all.

Correspondence

Hundreds of letters from all over the world written by aspirants for guidance, clarification and definite instructions inundate Swamiji's office every day. These are attended to by Swamiji himself and prompt replies despatched. Many of these must seem to Swamiji silly or unnecessary but he is too loving and kind to ignore any and sends suitable replies, tersely and not often long. Numerous typists are at this daily work and still Swamiji finds the need and time to himself write a good number of letters. It would appear he clearly sees the personality through the letter and deals with him in the most appropriate way, so much so, that every correspondent feels that Swamiji has a special interest in and liking for him. The 'Equal Vision' of the Gita, which characterises the life and work of the Guru is here at work and the identity of all beings comprehended with such perfection that the practice has become quite natural and easy for him. A collection of these letters would make a great and useful book to one and all.

Hospitality

As a host Swamiji is unsurpassed in the attention and interest he bestows on the needs and comforts of his guests—and all aspirants are treated by him as such. As the Ashram is situated at the foot of the

Himalayas and streams of pilgrims on their march halt for a day or days at Rishikesh. They are fed and housed free and they enjoy lasting benefits of the sight and contact of Swamiji. The natural surroundings, with the Himalayas on one side and the holy Ganges flowing with rhythmic music therefrom create profound feelings of spiritual joy and peace. All the details for a comfortable stay at the buildings of the Ashram set apart for the purpose, are carefully attended to by the workers of the Ashram under Swamiji's supervision. Ailing pilgrims get effective medical aid. As an accomplished doctor in his 'Poorva Ashram' Swamiji is quick to cure all bodily ailments and restore perfect health. The spiritual vibrations of the atmosphere also work a miracle. The hospital specially run for the purpose is always crowded by grateful pilgrim patients. Swamiji's eagerness to render such medical aid and his incomparable love and sympathy leave a lasting impression on all those who contact him in this regard. Himself wanting only frugal food, he is nevertheless ever anxious to feed the hosts sumptuously and well. Often sight-seers pass that way and they find the comforts of the place highly welcome. Swamiji quickly tackles them and turns their thoughts and life on the spiritual path by his simple talks and queries. Many who had passed through the Ashram for satisfaction of mere curiosity have been blessed with his Grace and have quite unintentionally turned God-ward. Such are his powers and eagerness to serve people at the highest

level. He treats the prince and the beggar, the erudite and ignorant with the same 'Narayana Bhav' full of cosmic love and humble adoration.

Orator and Singer

Sivananda is a great orator and impresses his hearers deeply. Well-versed in many Indian languages, he could thrill you with his Hindi, English, Sanskrit or Tamil speech. His ideas are always clothed in very apt and forceful language. He is besides a very good singer and his Bhajan songs rendered with feeling and emotion make one forget self and irresistibly turn God-ward even as the Swamiji gets merged in the spirit of the song. Many of his recorded songs and speeches give inspiration to thousands of hearers who use them daily. He has a unique way of combining words from different languages to correctly convey the idea. This also interests the hearer in understanding the words of the language he does not know and thus be a double benefit. The common man in the street never fails to be attracted by the sense and tune of the songs rendered in a clear and powerful voice.

The Forest University

I have but made a passing reference to this university situated in Sivanandanagar amidst beautiful surroundings. In these days of experimentation in education and the ever-shifting ideas in regard to the objectives and curricula, it is absolutely necessary for the state and the individual to bestow deep thought upon the subject. It has become a mere convention to speak of any period

as one of transition and no speaker or writer fails to begin his performance with such meaningless phrase, but it would be absolutely correct to assert now that the world and particularly India, is really in a period of transition. The world war II and the continuing atom bomb menace have distressed man's mind all over as never before. It has well been realised that greed and selfishness, untruth and violence have been allowed to sway evil human passions as never before in the history of mankind. Scientific progress and discoveries have been harnessed to complete the picture of horror in all minute details. The reaction to this most debased state has steadily set in and through the very depths of human degradation the feeble voice for a change to peace and reality is a head dimly callings to the statesmen and politicians to halt and 'turn about'.

India was a land of Rishis and Yogins, a land of spiritual wisdom and love, of plenty and purity. For a period these were submerged by the presence and control of an alien power. That era is now ended for ever. Let us go back to our great heritage; let us wash our hearts of all accumulated sins and dirt. We are fortunate in the presence of Swami Sivananda amidst us. He is beckoning us to tread the right path and leading us step by step. We shall be deaf to his great spiritual call only to imperil our future.

The correct planning of our educational ideal and the means to achieve it are therefore momentous to-day. On the youths of today rests the responsibility of steering the people aright tomorrow. Here.

tofore the aim of education continued to be merely to fit them earn their crumbs and even this low result has been only realised partly. The higher training of the mind and intellect with a view to comprehend the real purpose of life and disinterested service is what is needed to-day. The forest university started by Swamiji Sivananda offers a model of an institution which can bring about the crucial change in aims and methods. The students in this university are taught the Upanishads, Brahma Sutras, Gita, the several kinds of Yoga—all to spiritualise their outlook and make them fit to render 'Nishkamya Karma'. We have here a glimpse of the university where Sri Krishna and Kuchela had their education under Sandeepani Muni. The material equipment for such universities are inconsiderable but their spiritual effects are world-wide. At least one such university should be started in every District in India, the curriculum in other schools, starting from the very low classes, designed to fit them enter this final course in education. This may, if necessary be combined with a knowledge of essential physical sciences. Sanskrit ought to be a compulsory study, for that contains all the treasures which go to the building up of the character in the correct way. This is no utopian dream but a practical suggestion and Swamiji has demonstrated its utility and feasibility by the work and achievements of the Forest University may be depended upon to revolutionise thought and learning and in a few years India will be abounding in competent

persons to deliver the message of peace and love to the entire world.

Siva's Philosophy—His Works

In the foregoing chapters we have had an intimate analysis of the Philosophy and Religion of Swami Sivananda. His teachings in a nutshell, are calculated to rid man of all impurities and sins and fit him lead a full and perfect life of everlasting bliss to himself and others. Swami Sivananda is a practical Yogi, philosopher and teacher every inch of him and his work is his philosophy and Religion. His heart is the abode of cosmic love and his intellect quite in tune with the Divine will and purpose. This is the point which requires forcible emphasis. We want practical teachers, not mere preachers, more and more. Sri Krishna in the Gita shows the way by himself working, that others may take a useful lesson out of it. Sivananda's work is his highest philosophy and every aspirant can take as much from it as he is fitted by environment and temperament. The spread of that work and not mere verbal or intellectual appreciation is what the Guru teaches every one to attempt by dedicating all his minutes and hours to its fulfillments. That way will be real worship of the great Guru, his philosophy, Religion and teachings.

Worship of Hero, Guru and God

A kindly friend to whom I read out portions of these writings exclaimed—"But don't you think that such immeasurable praise for an individual is likely to be misunderstood by ordinary people as simple

hero-worship. Do you honestly believe that all these would be understood as well and in the good spirit you want them to be taken"—I replied quite coolly that the thought had never entered my mind as I was only concerned with a correct, honest portrayal of Guruji and his work as I understood it. On further reversal of the above question and answer, I am prompted to record some more thought on this aspect that it may be shared with the readers, some of whom might feel even as my friend did.

Hero-worship is not at all bad if the object really merits the description—Hero—and if the worship is done in the proper way and spirit. The 'odium' attached to what is popularly described as such (hero-worship) arises on account of verbal adulations and exaggerations on the one hand and suppression of truth on the other. In one sense 'divine Bhakti' may be described as highest hero-worship of Gods and Goddesses and that is rightly recognised as a most potent means of spiritual evolution and God-realisation. In this sense hero-worship becomes a great duty. It is not that God needs our praise or any such silly imagination but that the worship becomes necessary for every one to shed his sins and wrong thinking and thereby attune himself to the discovery of his essential nature and goal. Man is prepared to understand all the adjectives which the poet showers in his description of nature. He indifferently accepts every praise showered upon God because He is not in flesh and blood. But often the ego in man with

its varied manifestations of pride, jealousy, intolerance and the like is unable to see beyond a certain level when "another man" is adored or praised. The defect in such 'malady' is the most unspiritual appreciation of man being identified primarily with the body and then with the mind and intellect. People like my friend, the questioner are so ego-ridden quite unconsciously, that they see only its projection on all sides. In the case of Avatars like Swami Sivananda, it is not that they need or ask for praise or recognition. They are here for a special mission—that of redeeming man from his sins and relieving him from pains. No greater mission can be conceived and that is carried on against an array of physical and material difficulties and obstacles. We see objects not as they are, but as we are and until this 'we' is annihilated the truth is unveiled. Hence the indifferent study of the lives of saints in a clouded way, is a positive injustice done to oneself. It is suicidal in that it by-passes a very valuable opportunity to ascend to blissful regions. It is in this latter spirit that I would beg the readers to read the life of Swami Sivananda and assimilate his teachings. Everything will be gained thereby and the world to that extent made happier and better. Just contact the Divine Life Society and the Swamiji and experience the benefits for yourselves. All scepticism, doubt and ego—illusions will vanish in a manner you could not have thought of earlier. It is this supreme wish which has prompted me as it had prompted scores of others before me, in India and

outside to broadcast the message of Guruji and study his life with faith and devotion. The adoration of Swamiji is the veneration of all those divine qualities which has made him a 'Jeevanmukta' and whose lustre he is day and night shedding upon a world of 'Avidya' and 'Maya'. The 'Jnana Yajna' of Swami Sivananda is unparalleled in the history of the world, for its range, variety and efficacy. Every aspirant is taken along the path best suited for feelings of the rank materialist, the ignorant householder, the suffering patient and every other and by hopes cajoling, and very understandable advice, leads him on to the highest realisation. It is here that Swami Sivananda becomes a unique teacher. His methods are not the same for all types and temperaments. You see his writings range from simple sentences of few words to ponderous thunders of spiritual truths. His poems are without metre or rhyme as ordinarily understood but they bury within themselves a world of compressed thought and advice. Verily here is Lord Parameswara at the holy feet of Himalayas in Rishikesh. Take refuge in him reader, and swim the ocean of Samsara. Man is heir to immortality and this truth can be realised here and now.

Teacher for the West

Swami Sivananda's life and mission is of special utility to the West. During the last about a century, western philosophers and thinkers have been drawn more and more to the Vedantic teachings of India. Since all the spiritual wealth of India inherited from ancient sages and seers, is in Sanskrit, the West-

erner and quite a large number of Western-educated Indians ignorant of that great language are at a distinct disadvantage. For the benefit of these people the Swamiji has taken great pains to record faithful translations of all great Indian teachings in the English language. Besides the 'Prasthanatraya' (Brahma Sutras, Upanishads and the Gita) Swamiji has also translated all the greatest works included in Hinduism. The commentaries on these works have been recorded with an amount of force and practical realisation of which only 'Tapaswins' of the type of Swami Sivananda are capable. Other books of Swamiji begin with elementary practical lessons needed for the neophyte to get lively interest in the study. Thus no category of people, whatever their profession or avocation, however much they be steeped in material and mundane life escape Swamiji's loving care, attention and treatment. He descends to the level where he finds these, identifies himself with their environments, their physical and mental states,—in short befriends them on their own terms so intimately that they at once put wholehearted faith in the words and methods of Swamiji specially devised for their all-round evolution. Thus Swamiji has already created a wide circle of intimate disciples all the world over. No consideration nationality or religion can interfere in this healthy relationship for truth is one whatever it is, and however it is adored and practised.

Swami Sivananda is an ideal teacher for the West.

The Western world is today sorely afflicted in spirit. All her vaunted boasts to culture and civilization have been ruthlessly dashed upon the rocks of her own creation. The Atom-bomb fear which today engages the vigil of statesmen and politicians is a dangerous symptom of spiritual leprosy. Desolation, Death and Destruction are planned with the aid of science in a vain and foolish attempt to secure peace. From out of this fearful and suicidal wood the West has to be saved in the interests of human progress and divine values. Swami Sivananda beckons to the West to heed—to ponder over the perilous march, to save the world from ruin. There can be no loss of prestige in heeding the great call. Not to do so under stupid notions will indeed be the height of folly. It is never too late to retrace and go the right way. The Divine Life Society founded by Swamiji offers the way and the cure. Let not the West let go this golden opportunity.

Swamiji's "Prayers"

Swamiji's prayers in English form a unique class. The language in these are particularly soul-stirring and if remembered and repeated will reveal to the aspirants many of the intimate experiences which are embedded in them. Every book of Swamiji contains a few of these elevating pieces in accord with the subject matter. Whether praises of Gods or Goddesses, of 'appeals' to individual or cosmic Self, or descriptions of spiritual ideals and conditions, they are replete with the 'Bhav' of the great

personality behind. Hence they have a very chastening and ennobling effect on the chanter. The wisdom of all Swamiji's spiritual achievements has been compressed in these 'Prayers' which by themselves can lead the aspirant to blissful heights of Karma, Jnana and Bhakti.

Practical Lessons

The very first lessons in spiritual training have been laid for all in the various books of Swamiji. He shows how to find time for spiritual Sadhana, how to begin, how to keep up the progress and how to overcome the impediments, physical, material or mental. The keeping of the Spiritual Diary insisted upon by Swamiji is at once a corrector and spiritual barometer. No one is enjoined to start with rigid rules and restrictions but every latitude is allowed consistent with the one-pointed attention on the goal and the ideal. The details of the path subject to the above are immaterial. Hence the tremendous popularity of the Swamiji in India and outside—His almost caressing ways of dealing with his new disciples soon results in tremendous faith and thus prepares them for the greater ascents to be scaled by individual efforts under the Guru's directions and lead.

Cares and Carefree

Man is scared by cares every minute of his life. To overcome the cares is the problem of life as commonly understood. Cares when properly analysed are so only if we permit them or even make them

so. The fear and sufferings consequent upon our inability to meet the cares all right have become too widespread in the world today. "Be carefree. Be fearless," roars Swami Sivananda. "Fear is unnatural. Peace is your essential nature. Cast away fear this very moment and live in eternal bliss." The Swamiji too according to ordinary conceptions has cares—a great abundance of them. He has to run the Divine Life Society with its manifold activities and has therefore to depend on the whims and changing moods of the donors. He has to find good workers to carry on the various routine activities. He has to meet the views of critics and guide intimately hundreds of doubters, has to satisfy the curiosity of others—all crushing cares producing fears. Amidst these cares we find the Swamiji absolutely carefree living in highest God-Consciousness and completely oblivious to the stings of cares as we see it. This however is only one of the least achievements of the Guru as I have tried to analyse in the foregoing pages. What I want to emphasise here is the promise and word of Swamiji to make every one carefree if he but only cares to listen to his words of advice. "If the root is watered you need not bother about the leaves or branches" says Swamiji. The root is worship of God, the first duty, the second and the last of every thinking man in short the only duty for which man has embodied himself. Every other duty is performed, every care and fear transcended, every branch and leaf watered if this first duty of divine worship is attended to. Without

it man cannot solve his cares and fears as without water we cannot wash a pot. It is this simple mighty lesson which Swamiji wants to instil in everyone and he does it in his inimitable way harnessing to its efficient performance every method he finds useful and which are demanded by the extent and variety of misconceptions and sins we find in the world to-day.

Conclusion

And now I conclude my impressions of Swami Sivananda—my master—the spiritual volcano of Rishikesh radiating love and prayers to the entire universe. His mission is thus inspired by cosmic compassion. I have tried to impress on the reader the benefits he stands to gain by availing the balm of spiritual glory which the Swamiji offers in good faith. Thousands have been benefited by it. The Divine Life Society has a lesson and a message for one and all. It is functioning for every one of us. The man of material wealth and riches has to make liberal donations to the funds of the Society. That will indeed be sacrifice and duty in the right sense for no better cause could there be than a world-wide spiritual mission. Jnana Yajna, the highest boon of divinity is in the ultimate Swamiji's chosen work and that needs material support. The unhappy materialists should realise the way and the means to become happy and peaceful. The majority devoid of material essentials and confronted with physical disabilities have to be raised and consoled by Swamiji—the grand ideal that is his. We want it

very much more than Swamiji but much pleading is required since we have strayed from the path and are in pursuit of peace and happiness where they are not. The false values which guide the majority of mankind have to be altered and replaced by the true ones.

India has been lucky in the sense that the torch of her spiritual glory has been kept aloft by saints and sages who have appeared in her soil from time to time throughout the long past. She has been unfortunate for the apathy of the majority of people to take full advantage of the auspicious presence, being content to use the name for verbal gains when it suits a little individual purpose. The latest instance of Mahatmaji is of poignant memory—you cannot have the like of him whenever you want and yet during his lifetime his message and work did not receive the support and earnest attention which might have been bestowed on it. Mahatmaji was adored as an Avatar not so much by deeds but by word of praise so long as he chose to remain to guide us. His disappearance opened the eyes of people to the great void to the greatest opportunities missed. Such misfortunes on a National scale have been India's lot. Shall we not profit by past experiences. Spiritual and divine life was what he taught us to understand and live. Exactly that is what Swami Sivananda wants us now to do.

ALL-INDIA-CEYLON TOUR

It was a wonderful whirlwind that swept the whole nation clean of the threatening materialistic dirt. For two months—September-October, 1930, this Divine Being Siva toured the whole of India, up to Colombo in Ceylon and Cape Comorin in India. Indescribable were the scenes of devout reception that awaited him at all the centres he visited. Soul-stirring were his lectures at all gatherings over 180 of which he addressed. The Lord's Name filled the entire atmosphere of the country. The gospel of selflessness, the gospel of love, the gospel of true renunciation, the gospel of meditation—in short the gospel of Divine Life was broadcast throughout the length and breadth of the country. Millions had their rebirth in the life divine. The sage, the foremost son of Free India, by raising the banner of spiritual independence, restored India to her rightful place as the spiritual guide to all mankind.

THE WORLD PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS

Bhagavan Sivananda does not expect everyone to abandon one's religion and embrace a new world religion ; but he lovingly invites your attention to the common strands that run through all religions of the world, and reveals that the foundation, fundamentals, and fulfilment of all religions are the same. This is what he achieved during the World Parliament of Religions which he convened in April 1953, which was attended by over two hundred delegates from all over the world, representing all religions and all shades of religious thought, A renowned savant of India, Dr Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer inaugurated the Parliament.

THE PLATINUM JUBILEE

The 70th Birthday of Sri Swami Sivananda—8th September, 1956—was another great event which was celebrated on a grand scale, not only at Sivanandanagar, but all over the world at all Branches of the Divine Life Society. Rishikesh will ever remember the unprecedented procession on the eve of the Holy Day, and the divine resplendence with which the Sage shone, blessing one and all. On this holy Day Srimati Kumudini Devi opened at Sivanandanagar the Sivananda Mandir in which lives enshrined the Immortal Sivananda.

CONTENTS

	<i>Pages</i>
Publishers' Note	iii
The Donor : Sreemati Kutty Vellodi	v
Foreword	vi
श्री शिवानन्दाष्टकम्	vii
Anahata Sabda Yoga	viii
Discomfort During Meditation Explained	ix
Spiritual Experiences	xi
Song of Sadhana	xii
Satguru Sivananda	xiii
<i>Chapter I—Nature and States of Consciousness</i>	
1. Nature of Consciousness	3
2. Four Kinds of Consciousness	3
3. Aspects of Consciousness	12
4. Turiya State	16
<i>Chapter II—Cosmic Consciousness</i>	
5. An Analytical Study of Cosmic Consciousness	23
6. Super Sublime State	25
7. Western Concept of Cosmic Consciousness	28
8. Celestial Vision	29
9. Supreme Awareness	31
10. Characteristics of Experience	32
11. Commonsense Approach	33
12. Appearances are Questionable	35
13. Ramacharaka's Views on Cosmic Consciousness	37
14. Bucke's Views	44
15. A Definite Way to Contact God	46
16. Physiological Changes	49
17. The Everlasting Aims	50
18. Non-Dual Consciousness	54

Chapter III—*Experiences in Meditation*

19. Common Experiences in Meditation	63
20. Various Kinds of Vision in Meditation	70
21. Experience of Jerks ...	76
22. Lights in Meditation ...	77
23. Anahata Sounds ...	81
24. Feeling of Separation from Body and Other Experiences ...	83
25. Some Doubts clarified ...	89
26. Guidance on the Path ...	91

Chapter IV—*Samadhi or the State of Super-Consciousness*

27. What is Samadhi ...	97
28. Jada Samadhi and Chaitanya Samadhi	100
29. Light on the Path of Samadhi ...	102
30. The State of Blissful Divine Experience	113
31. Bhakti Yoga Samadhi ...	118
32. Raja Yoga Samadhi ...	121
33. How the Yogi comes down from Samadhi : —Examples of Sikhidhwaja and Prahlada	130
34. Jnana Yoga Samadhi ...	132
35. Savikalpa and Nirvikalpa Samadhi ...	140
36. Six Kinds of Jnana Samadhis ...	142
37. Samadhi according to Upanishads ...	145
38. Samadhi in Six Months ...	149
39. Samadhi in Six Months as Enjoined in the Mahabharata ...	151
40. Some Experiences in Samadhi ...	152
(i) Sage Uddalaka's Experience	
(ii) King Janaka's Experience	
(iii) King Bali's Experience	
(iv) Kacha's Experience	

41. Obstacles to Samadhi	...	156
42. Pseudo Samadhi	...	158
43. Prashnottari on Samadhi	...	163

Chapter V—*Some Yogic Experiences*

44. Experiences of a Yogi	...	171
45. Four Classes of Yogins	...	172
46. Somapana (Amrita Srava)	...	174
47. Experiences of a Bhakta	...	177
48. State of Spiritual Illumination	...	179

Chapter VI—*Kundalini Shakti*

49. Prayer to Mother Kundalini	...	185
50. Experiences on Awakening of Kundalini		186
51. The Gradational Ascent of the Mind		188

Chapter VII—*Psychic Powers*

52. Siddhis or Occult Powers	...	193
53. Eight Major Psychic Powers	...	194
54. Other Psychic Powers	...	196
55. Levitation or Vayu Siddhi	...	198
56. Kaya Sampat	...	202
57. Comments on Some Occult Phenomena		203
58. Samyama Leads to Occult Powers	...	208

Chapter VIII—*Signs of Spiritual Progress*

59. Song of Spiritual Progress	...	215
60. Main Characteristics of Progress in Sadhana		216
61. Other Important Characteristics	...	218
62. Signs of Progress in the Path of Meditation		220
63. An Anecdote on Spiritual Experience		225

Chapter IX—*Experiences of the Jnana Yogi*

64. Phases of Experience in Jnana Yoga		231
65. Four Types of Jnanins	...	232

66. Seven Stages of Jnana	...	233
67. Double-Consciousness of a Jeevanmukta		238
68. Samadhi Jnani and Vyavahara Jnani	...	240
69. The Sage's Experience	...	243
70. Marks of a Realised Sage - An Anecdote		248

Chapter X—*The State of Liberation*

71. A Detailed Analysis of the State of Moksha		253
(i) Sadyo Mukti		
(ii) Krama Mukti		
72. Four Kinds of Mukti	...	271
73. Difference between Jeevanamukti and Videhamukti (An Anecdote)	...	272

Chapter XI—*Experiences of some South Indian Mystics*

74. Mystic Experiences of Nayanars and Siddhas		275
75. Saint Tirumular	...	288
76. Saint Tirunavukurasar	...	293
77. Saint Manickavachagar	...	302

Chapter XII—*Experiences of some Christian Mystics*

78. Experiences of Some Christian Mystics—I		311
79. " " " " —II		319
80. Experiences of Jesus Christ	...	325
81. Christ-Consciousness	...	327

APPENDIX

82. Experiences of Muslim Mystics	...	331
83. Why God Created Man (An Anecdote)		332
84. Seeds and Fruits of Yoga	...	334
85. Philosophical Truths	...	335
86. A Renowned Army Officer's Experience		357
Inspiring Letters of Sivananda	...	341
Story of Swami Sivananda	...	347

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES

CHAPTER I

NATURE AND STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

ESPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES

CHAPTER I

THEORY AND STATE OF
CONSCIOUSNESS

1. NATURE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

It is extremely difficult to define what consciousness means. Words and languages are imperfect. They cannot adequately express your thoughts and ideas.

There are different kinds of consciousness. There are physical consciousness, astral consciousness, mental consciousness, supra-mental consciousness or lower Prakamya or Prajna consciousness, cosmic consciousness, superconsciousness, subconsciousness, unconsciousness, dream consciousness, supra-cosmic consciousness, dual or double consciousness, multiple consciousness, higher Prakamya, Virat consciousness, Hiranyagarbha consciousness, Divine consciousness or (Purushottama consciousness) and lastly the Highest Nirguna Para Brahma consciousness or Absolute consciousness *per se*.

In the waking state, (Jagrat Avastha of Vedantins), you are conscious of this physical plane. You see, you feel, you think, you know, you will, you exert (perception or sensation, cognition, emotions, or affection, or cogitation, volition conation—Prayatna). This is the physical consciousness.

When you transcend the physical body and operate on the astral plane with the astral body, you will have astral consciousness. You will move, and talk with the astral entities.

When you operate in the mental plane with the mental body, you will have mental consciousness.

You will identify yourself with the mind just as you identify yourself now with the physical body. You will have psychic Siddhis as clairvoyance, clairsaudience, psychometry, telepathy, thought-reading, etc. You will converse here with the mental entities. Here the language is one.

When you transcend the mind you will identify yourself with your individual Karana Sareera or causal body. You will have lower Divya Drishti. Here you will have an expanded consciousness. You will have very subtle Etheric body and operate in an Etheric plane. You will have tremendous powers. You will be in union with the Divine Consciousness. The veil between you and Brahman is very thin now. If you exert you can peep into Brahman and can have glimpses of Brahmic consciousness. This is Prajna consciousness or lower Prakamya. You will be an occupant of Satyaloka or Hiranyagarbhaloka with the individual Karana Sareera. When you universalise now you can become one with Divine consciousness. You will have the whole cosmic consciousness. This is (Purushottama consciousness with Adi Shakti or Para Prakriti or Avyaktam). This is Higher Prakamya.

When you throw off the veil of Adi Shakti also, you will become one with pure, Nirguna, Para Brahman, Ananta consciousness, the Highest end of human life (Kaivalya). It is very difficult to rest here for a long time.

Between Hiranyagarbha and Ishwara there is the veil of Avyaktam.

There is one school of thought that says that Ishwara is a reflection in Maya. This is Abhasavada or doctrine of reflection. An objector says: "When there is only one thing, how can there be a reflection? Further if Ishwara is a reflection in Maya, how will He be able to control Maya? This is not right.

Swaroopā Lakshana of Brahman is Sat-chit-ananda. Tatastha Lakshana of Brahman is Ishwara with powers of omnipotence, omniscience, etc.

When we take the Tatastha Lakshana of Brahman, Ishwara has full consciousness of Nirguna Brahman, as well as the whole cosmic consciousness. Here Saguna Brahman is identical with pure Nirguna Brahman. This is Avachcheda Vada. This is the doctrine of limitation.

There is only Nirguna Brahman. Saguna Brahman is a mere appearance for the sake of pious meditation of Bhaktas.

2. FOUR KINDS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

There are four types of consciousness—consciousness, subconsciousness, superconsciousness and double consciousness.

Consciousness means Prajna. There is physical consciousness. One is conscious of his body and his surroundings—the visible objects of this universe. In mental consciousness one feels the operations of the mind, his sentiments, thoughts and feelings. Very few people have got mental consciousness. They have got only consciousness of the body. It is only those who have got subtle intellect, who have got a knowledge of psychology, who are practising a little bit of concentration, meditation and introspection will be able to know about mental consciousness.

Then comes the subconscious wherein all the Samskaras are stored up. It is like a lumber room. From the subconscious through memory, ideas come to the surface of the mind, to the conscious. Subconscious is called Chitta. In Vedanta 'Chit' is pure consciousness, absolute consciousness, Brahmic consciousness, supreme consciousness. 'Chitta' is subconscious, and Chit is Para Brahman. You do an action. You desire an object and experience it. The experience goes to subconscious mind. It remains there until you get a stimulus from the external world or from within through memory. Then the ideas and Samskaras come to the surface of the

mind. Vasana becomes a Samskara and Samskara becomes a Vasana. Action produces an impression and impression goads you to repeat an action again. This is a vicious circle. There is no end for it. It is the Samskaras imprinted on the subconscious mind that force you to take rebirth again and again. These Samskaras can only be destroyed by knowledge of Brahman. Then alone you are free from births and deaths and you become a Jeevanmukta or Mukta Purusha. You will have to be careful in producing impressions in the subconscious mind. Do good deeds. Have sublime divine thoughts. Do Japa and Kirtan. This will produce good Samskaras and destroy the evil impressions. Be good and do good and practise meditation. You can generate good Samskaras in the subconscious mind.

Then we have got superconscious state. That is Para Brahman, where there are neither names nor forms, neither darkness nor light, neither east nor west, nor visible objects. It is pure Absolute Consciousness, consciousness *per se*. The goal of life is attainment of the superconscious state. It is called Nirvikalpa Samadhi, Asamprajnata Samadhi. We have to transcend the body and the mind and enter into the superconscious state through meditation. After equipping oneself with the four means one should practise hearing, reflection and Nididhyasan. Then he will get Atma Sakshatkara.

Below the superconscious state according to Raja Yoga there are various kinds of Savikalpa Samadhis.

In Vedanta also there are Savikalpa Samadhis. Savitarka, Nirvitarka, Savichara, Nirvichara, Sa-ananda, and Asmita are Savikalpa Samadhis according to Raja Yoga. Antar Drishyanuvid, Antah Sabdanuvid, Bahya Drishyanuvid, Bahya Sabdanuvid are forms of Savikalpa Samadhis according to Vedanta. These are lower stages. There are Triputi or triad—the knower, knowledge and the known, the seer, sight and the seen,—and above these stages there is Asamprajnata Samadhi or Nirvikalpa Samadhi or Nirbeeja Samadhi. There are no Vrittis, no Vasanas, no imagination, no Sankalpas, in that state. There is only pure consciousness. That is our goal. That is Para Brahman.

In double consciousness the sage is resting in his own Swarupa enjoying the supreme bliss, and at the same time he works in this world like Janaka. He has double consciousness. He has not forgotten his own pure, Brahmic state, and at the same time he has consciousness of the world. Just as a crow has got only one eye, but it turns here and there its socket, even so, the Jeevanmukta resting in his own Swarupa utilises his mind for serving humanity. If the mind is completely destroyed as in a Videhamukta, he cannot work in this world. Then we will have no Jeevanmuktas to teach the aspirants. A certain portion of Avidya remains, Sattwic Vasana remains, called Lesha Avidya, where there is Swarupa Manonasa of the mind. In a Jeevanmukta the whole mind is not destroyed. Rajas and Tamas are destroyed, but Sattwic egoism remains. It is through this that he beholds the world within himself. In a Videha-

mukta the whole mind is destroyed. He is absorbed in Para Brahman completely.

Through Sadhana the aspirant raises the Brahmakara Vritti. He thinks, "I am Akhanda-Ekarasa-Chinmatra Brahman, (I am one indivisible, homogeneous essence), I am Nitya-Suddha-Swaroopa, I am Nitya-Bodha-Swaroopa, I am Nitya-Tripti Swaroopa (I am ever pure, I am pure consciousness, I am eternal satisfaction), I am Sat-Chit-Ananda Swaroopa (I am an embodiment of existence-knowledge-bliss)." There is Achintya Sakti (unthinkable power), there is Ananta Sakti (infinite power) in these words. These thoughts destroy all Vishayakara Vrittis and raise the Brahmakara Vritti. Thought of Brahman alone remains. This Brahmakara Vritti destroys the original Avidya, and the aspirant rests in his own Swaroopa.

In Western philosophy they used the word intuition. The understanding of the Western philosophers of the word 'intuition' is different from the understanding of intuition by the eastern philosophers. Their intuition is not the same intuition conceived of by the eastern philosophers. Intuition is a faculty, a higher wisdom, Jnana-Chakshus, which Sanjaya and Arjuna had. Intuition sometimes refers to Para Brahman Himself, the Experience Whole. Intuition does not contradict reason. It fulfils it, and it is above reason. It is the door or gateway to Para Brahman, to Knowledge of Brahman.

Arjuna had Cosmic Consciousness, Viswarupa-

darshan. Above Cosmic Consciousness is Supercosmic state. Ishwara has got Cosmic Consciousness as well as Supercosmic Consciousness. Bhaktas who go to Satyaloka and dwell with Hiranyagarbha experience Cosmic Consciousness. They have got full knowledge of the process of creation of this world, of the Tanmatras, mind, Mahat. They have got experience of Cosmos. That is called Cosmic Consciousness.

The highest state of consciousness is Turiya. To some Jeevanmuktas the world appears like a dream. To some Jeevanmuktas it appears like deep sleep,—according to the Sattwic egoism present in them. Gradually the sage ascends the highest rung in the ladder of wisdom. In the last stage he has no knowledge of the world. He would not take food by himself. He has to be fed. Mowni Swamiji of Kumbakonam was in the last stage. Akalkot Swamiji had also this experience. They had no knowledge of this world. They were completely absorbed in their Selves. They had withdrawn themselves completely from the world-consciousness, whereas sages like Janaka had a slight experience of the world. So Janaka was able to rule the kingdom. Jnanins are of two kinds,—Samadhi Jnanins and Vyavaharic Jnanins. Those sages who work in this world with a slight feeling of this world are called Vyavaharic sages. Those sages who are absorbed in Samadhi, who cannot work for the well-being of this world are called Samadhi Jnanins.

So let us get ourselves established in Para Brah-

man and enjoy the bliss of the Eternal and radiate joy and bliss to the world and work for the solidarity of the world. Through Sadhana, meditation, discipline, constant Abhyasa and Vairagya, may you all become Jeevanmuktas in this very birth.

3. ASPECTS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The disciple asks :

I find that the four different aspects of consciousness, namely, Jagrat, Swapna, Sushupti, and Turiya, are mutually exclusive of each other in the sense that the Jivatma is not aware of the other aspect when it is aware of one of them. The common link, of course, is the Jivatman himself. Does it follow that all these aspects in fact co-exist all the time but that the Jivatma is aware of only one at a time? Why so ?

Do you think that this division in our consciousness made by ancient Rishis has anything in common with the recent divisions of consciousness, such as consciousness, self-consciousness, subconsciousness, the unconscious, and superconsciousness ?

Which division could we say is more scientific and more true to experience ?

The Guru replies :

The Avasthas may be loosely stated to be exclusive but they are not wholly so. In Turiya all the lower three states are 'included' and absorbed. For, Turiya totally resolves them on to the pure Light of knowledge-Consciousness. Into It they subside and It transcends, them all.

However the 'Jivatma' is not the common link beneath the four Avasthas but Turiya is the common link. It is the substratum, the basic consciousness or the Swaroopa Chaitanya underlying all.

Strictly speaking, Turiya is not a state, though referred to as the fourth. Turiya is verily Brahman. It is an embodiment of peace and bliss. As already stated, it is the substratum for the other three states viz., the waking, the dreaming and the sleeping. It pervades the three states. It is Absolute Being. Therefore, it is transcendental. It is Swatah-Siddha or self-proved. Hence it is not 'consciousness' in the ordinary sense in which that term is used, but rather it is consciousness in its transcendental Essence of which the lower relative states of consciousness are but reflections.

Regarding the awareness of the Jivatma, it is true that he experiences one state at a time. This 'compartmental experience,' as it were, is due to the fact that the three states overlap one another so that when one functions the other is covered over and latent, so to say. One particular Guna dominates the field of consciousness and covers up the other two. With the dawn of Turiya, however, this delimitation disappears. You are now raised into cosmic consciousness. The Jivatma consciousness is replaced by Viswatma consciousness.

The conscious, subconscious, unconscious and superconscious states are in some respects similar to the classification of the ancients, viz., the Jagrat, Swapna, Sushupti and Turiya states of consciousness. But they are not identical. The Jagrat state of consciousness mentioned in the Upanishads has more metaphysical implications than the conscious

state of psychologists. Similar is the case with the Swapna and Sushupti states. The ancient Hindu philosophers meant by the Jagrat consciousness not merely the mental consciousness which when it is reflected through the psychoses of the mind is called the Jiva in the Jagrat state. Swapna is the state where the mind functions independent of the senses on the basis of the impressions made in it during waking experience. The Sushupti state is not really one of absolute unconsciousness but one in which the psychoses of the mind get themselves wound up and are reduced to a state of Tamas through which the consciousness of the Supreme Self cannot be reflected. The fundamental difference between the ancient classification made in the Upanishads and the one made by modern psychologists is that the former takes into consideration the transcendental consciousness as the basis of the appearance of the three relative states while the latter makes a mere empirical study of the behaviour of the mind as observed by the analytical intellect. The Super-conscious state, however, can be identified with the Turiya provided of course the former is not taken to be the same as that higher light of the mind which is called intuition and which is the gateway to the realisation of Turiya, but not identical with it.

We cannot but admit that the division and classification made by the ancient scientists of the spirit is the more correct because it is not the result of inference through observation but in the nature of an authoritative declaration based upon actual super-

sensual cognition and direct experience by the seer.

The ultimate light upon this highly subtle matter has, however, to come through personal realisation alone. Perfect inward renunciation, total purification and earnest Sadhana and meditation are means to attain such realisation. The seeker has to be resolutely bold and active in his quest through patience and perseverance upon this spiritual path is the ultimate goal attained.

4. THE TURIYA STATE

The disciple asks :

Mandukya Upanishad deals more or less in a scientific manner with the four stages, or rather aspects of our consciousness. With three, we are all quite familiar. The question is of the Turiya, which is described as 'Pranchopashamam.'

Might it be that our consciousness, which is usually at home with diversity, when forced by will to fix itself on absolute unity, loses itself and is in the state of a kind of continuous trance as Sheranda Samhita puts it. But since our consciousness is not entirely independent of its physical basis, the human brain centre, after a time it returns and again finds the diversity from which it had taken temporary leave.

Of course, it is open to the aspirant to force consciousness not to return at all, in which case the Turiya stage would be the final stage and consciousness would not return to the body, leaving it a shell of dead matter.

The question, however, is whether it is the individual that can decide the return of his consciousness from Turiya, or is it the Universal Will?

The Guru replies :

Regarding the question of Turiya, referred to as 'Pranchopashamam,' I must say that the whole

question requires to be viewed from a different, perceptive altogether; for, in fact, it is not so much a case of Consciousness being "usually" at home with diversity", and thence being "forced by will to fix itself on absolute unity"; but on the contrary, it is rather a matter of CONSCIOUSNESS which is eternally characterised by Self-Experience of Absolute Unity being enabled to revert into and regain its pristine Unity-Awareness, which is its essential Being, by a constant, purposeful, and persistent negation of and withdrawal from the phenomenal experience (and the endless diversities connoted thereby) into which it has temporarily got involved through the original Cosmic Nescience. This descent into Ajnana is like unto a brief sleep of delusion—Moha Nidra. Thus it should be known that, as compared with the stupendous state of Time-Transcendent Eternity, this condition of Jiva-consciousness is but a momentary, passing experience, which is unnatural to our essential Being. THAT is the real state where our consciousness, is ever at home, for that indeed is 'Swa-Swaroopa' that indeed the 'Nija Dhama'.

Pure Consciousness is absolutely independent of any physical basis whatsoever. Even with reference to the individual Jiva's consciousness, here too consciousness becomes dependent upon its physical basis in so far it is called upon to be manifest and function in physical and mental levels in the first two states i.e. the waking and the dream, Jagrat and Swapna. Even in the human being, consciousness, does become independent of its physical moorings

in the state of Sushupti when it withdraws itself into the subtle supra-physical Puritat Nadi in the Hridaya, which is not in the Sthula Sarira. Here, consciousness is upon the subtler astral or psychic level. But, of course, when it has once again to function upon the mental and physical planes upon waking, it has inevitably to take up its stand in and function through the mind and senses. However, all this is with reference to the vast generality of human mind that is totally caught up in Ajnana and which has not taken to Yoga. It is with reference to such in whom spiritual consciousness has not yet been awakened. All such belonging to this class (in other words, practically the vast majority of mankind) are but aware only of physical-consciousness and mental consciousness. But a definite and significant change does take place in the consciousness of the individual who takes recourse to Yoga. He experiences, through rising up in the Yoga Marga, an ascent into a higher level of awareness as a result of the awakening of spiritual consciousness, to that degree there comes about a progressive independence of the physical aspect of the man. Reaching perfection, the Yogi attains the highest super-consciousness. This is entirely independent of all physical basis. This is Turiya.

At this stage regarding the consciousness, return from which it had taken temporary leave" and regarding "whether it is the individual that can decide the return of his consciousness from Turiya, or is it the Universal Will"? These points are of particular interest, because their consideration

serves to specially bring light to one or two of the most distinctive features that characterise the Turiya Chaitanya. To take the first point, when the experience of Super-consciousness in highest Samadhi or the Turiya experience is attained, the consciousness never again experiences the same vision that it had previous to this experience. Henceforth the Yogi returns with knowledge, an Enlightened Being. It is a consciousness with the Light of Knowledge. The Yogi's vision of the world is not the vision of the man in ignorance, who perceives the diversity and takes it to be real. The Yogi's vision (upon return from Turiya experience) is based upon knowledge. It perceives, not diversity but Unity in diversity. Thenceforth his Unity consciousness becomes the basis of his perception. The entire world of diversity stands before his vision, in a different light altogether. This vision is indescribable.

Regarding the second point, actually this question does not arise, because in the state of Turiya the individuality is no more. It gets merged and absorbed into the Cosmic or the Universal Consciousness. This is precisely what is implied by 'Prapanchopashamam.' 'Prapancha' or world experience is, in essence, nothing but the individual consciousness. Thus it must be known that in Turiya there is at-one-ment and the individual and Universal do not exist as two factors, but a condition of identity prevails. Hence it is the Universal will that operates.

CHAPTER TWO
COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS

COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS
CHAPTER TWO

5. AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS

What is Cosmic Consciousness ?

The state of Cosmic Consciousness is beyond description. It induces awe, supreme joy and unalloyed felicity. This state of cosmic consciousness is below the absolute consciousness (Nirguna-Brahmic consciousness) wherein the seer, sight, the things seen, or the knower, knowable and knowledge or the subject and object become one. In cosmic consciousness there is yet the seer and the seen.

Cosmic consciousness is perfect awareness of the oneness of life. The Yogi feels that the universe is filled with one life, that there is no such thing as blind force or dead matter and that all is alive, vibrating and intelligent. He experiences a sense of universality, a consciousness of Eternal Life. He who has cosmic consciousness feels that the universe is all his. He is one with the Supreme Lord, with the Universal Knowledge and Life. He gets the eye celestial and experiences bliss beyond understanding and description.

A Yogi of cosmic consciousness develops the cosmic sense and has universal understanding. He is conscious of being in the immediate presence of God. During illumination the flood-gate of joy breaks and he realises that the deep, everlasting

fountain of joy exists in every heart, that the immortal life underlies all beings, that the eternal, all-embracing, all-inclusive love envelops, supports and guides every particle, every atom of creation. Sin, sorrow, death are now but words for him, without meaning. He feels the elixir of life, the nectar of immortality flowing in his veins. His face shines with a radiant light. His eyes are lustrous. They are pools of joy and bliss. He feels that the entire world is bathed in the sea of satisfying love, which is the very essence of life. He feels that the whole world is his body; that all hands and all feet are his. Chair, table, tree have a cosmic significance. He could never feel strange or alien to any place.

Cosmic consciousness is an inherent, natural faculty of all men and women. It is inactive, or non-functioning in the majority of human beings. Yogic training and discipline are necessary to awaken the exalted blissful state of cosmic consciousness.

The four kinds of Mukti and the Bhava Samadhi of Bhaktas, the lower Samadhis of a Raja Yogi (viz. Savitarka, Savichara, Nirvichara, Sa-ananda, Sasmīta, Ritambhara, Prajna, etc.), and the lower Savikalpa Samadhis (viz. Shabdanuvid, Dhrishyanuvid) of a Vedantin all lead to the experience of cosmic Consciousness. The ways of approach may be different but the fruit is the same. The experiences are common. Intuition, revelation, inspiration, ecstasy are synonymous terms

6. SUPER SUBLIME STATE

Wordsworth in this poem "Tintern Abbey" describes Samadhi as follows:-

".....That blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood.
In which the affections gently lead us on,
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In Body, and become a living soul.
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things."

The state of cosmic consciousness is grand and sublime. It induces awe, supreme joy and highest, unalloyed felicity, free from pain, sorrow and fear. This state of cosmic consciousness is below the absolute consciousness or Nirguna Brahmic Consciousness wherein the seer, sight and the things seen, or the knower, knowable, and knowledge, or the subject and object become one. In cosmic consciousness there is yet the seer and the seen. It is doubtless a very subtle experience. It is divine experience. It is a revelation of the Karan Jagat wherein the types are realised. Brahmic conscious

ness is the experience of Maha-Karan wherein there is neither time, space nor causation. It is unconditioned, ineffable state. Srutis describe it negatively—Neti, Neti—not this, not this. "*Yato vaacho nivartante aprapya manasa saha ananda brahmano Vidwan na bibheti kadaachana*—The mind and speech return back from it baffled as they are not able to grasp and describe it; the wise who knows the Brahman which is bliss is not afraid of anything at any time".

Sri Sankara, Dattatreya, Vama Deva, Jada Bharata, Mansoor, Shams Tabriez, Madalasa, Yajnavalkya had the experience of super-cosmic consciousness whereas Ram Das, Tulsi Das, Kabir, Ramanuja, Mira, Gouranga, Madhava, Hafitz, Tukaram, Lord Jesus, Lord Buddha had experience of cosmic consciousness. The pure Brahmic consciousness is to be felt by the Sadhaka. It cannot be described in words. The language is imperfect. The cosmic consciousness is the experience of Brahma Loka. It is the consciousness of Brahma or Hiranyagarbha. The Yogi acquires all Divine Aishwaryas. He who experiences cosmic consciousness attains many kinds of Siddhis, which are described in Bhagavata and Raja Yoga of Patanjali Maharshi.

Arjuna, Sanjaya, Devaki had this experience of cosmic consciousness. Devaki saw the whole Virat in the mouth of the Bala Krishna. Gita describes this state of consciousness through the mouth of Arjuna in these words: "The mighty form, with many mouths and eyes, long armed, with thighs and feet

innumerable, vast bosomed, set with many fearful teeth; radiant Thou touchest heaven, rainbow-hued, with opened mouths, and shining mouths and shining, vastrobed, eyes on every side, all-swallowing, fiery tongued, Thou lickest up mankind devouring all into Thy gaping mouths, tremendous—toothed and terrible to see; some caught within the gaps between thy teeth, are seen, their heads to powder crushed and ground."

7. WESTERN CONCEPT OF COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS

In the West also people have to recognise the truth about cosmic consciousness when one rises above body-consciousness. Some have also tasted and experienced this state. In France, Professor Bergson is preaching about intuition which transcends reason but does not contradict it. Bucke describes cosmic consciousness as follows :—"Cosmic consciousness is a third form, which is as far above self-consciousness as is that above simple consciousness. It is Supra-conceptual. The cosmic consciousness as its name implies, is the life and order of the universe. Along with the consciousness of the cosmos there occurs an intellectual enlightenment, which alone would place the individual on a new plane of existence. To this is added a state of moral exaltation, an indescribable feeling of elation and joyousness and a quickening of the moral sense, which is fully as striking and more important, both to the race and the individual, that is the enhanced intellectual power. With these comes what may be called a sense of immortality, a consciousness of eternal life, not a conviction that he shall have it, but the consciousness that he has it already."

8. CELESTIAL VISION

The eye celestial usually comes to a Yogi (mystic) who has advanced much in mysticism. But it is not possible for everyone to get this celestial eye, as each and every one cannot be a mystic. Sri Krishna therefore said to Arjuna, "In the form in which you have seen Me, I cannot be seen even by means of Vedas, by austerities, by gifts or by sacrifices " Ch. II-53.

He who gets the experience of supra-cosmic consciousness has the feeling of Apta Kama (one who has obtained all that he desires). He feels "there is nothing more to be known by me."

The Jiva-hood has gone now. The little "I" has melted. The differentiating mind that splits up has vanished. All barriers, all sense of duality, differences, separateness have disappeared. There is no idea of time and space. There is only Eternity. The Jiva has realised his identity with Brahman. The ideas of caste, creed and colour have gone now. When he becomes a Brahma-Varishta when he enters the seventh stage of Jnana or Turiyateeta, even the slight body-consciousness, which was in a state of Samskara or mental retentum disappears. He has to be fed by the spectators. The world completely disappears for him. He experiences the state described by Ajati Vadin or the utterance of Srutis *Neha nana asti kinchana*—there is no such thing as diversity.

The world is a mental creation. It is mere impression only. There is no world during sleep. You may argue that the world exists for the waking man. Yes, quite true. If there is mind, there is world. What is mind then ? It is a bundle of impressions, ideas, habits. The two currents, Raga-Dwesha, keep up the life of the mind. If these two currents are destroyed, there is death for the mind. It is called Manonasa. That Yogi who has achieved Manonasa cannot perceive the world. If you can consciously destroy the mind through Samadhi, this world disappears. Just as you see the rope only when the Bhranti of snake has vanished, so also you see Brahman only when the Bhranti of world and body has disappeared by knowledge of the Self.

My scientists and students of science may not believe me. Do this practice now. Shut yourself up in a room for a week. Cut off all connections. Do not read newspapers. Observe perfect Mowna silence) also. Then feel how far the impressions of the world remain in your mind. You will feel that the world is a dream. If you practise for a long time, you will realise the truth of my statement. The world is a solid reality for a man of passion and greed, for a sensualist who has gross mind. For a Yogi of cosmic consciousness, it dwindles into an airy nothing.

9. SUPREME AWARENESS

Cosmic consciousness is the fruit of Chaitanya Samadhi, where the Yogi feels perfect 'awareness' of a super-sensuous plane of knowledge and intuition. He feels his existence "Aham Asmi—I exist" whereas the Jada-Samadhi of a Hatha-Yogi cannot bring in this super-conscious state. It is something like deep sleep. There is no super-sensuous divine knowledge in this state. The breathing stops completely. The Prana is fixed up somewhere in the Muladhara Chakra. Even if you cut his leg, he will not feel any pain. There will be no bleeding. But the Samskaras and Vasanas are not burnt here. Whereas in Brahmic Consciousness, the Vasanas and Samskaras are fried in toto. There is Alamban °(support for the mind) there is Triputi (triad, knower, knowable, knowledge). There are subtle Samskaras in Savikalpa Samadhi or lower Samadhi. In Nirvikalpa Samadhi there is neither Alamban nor Triputi nor Samskara. The Jada-Samadhi cannot give liberation. One can enter into Jada-Samadhi without any moral perfection, whereas cosmic consciousness can never be had without ethical perfection. Note this point very carefully.

10. CHARACTERISTICS OF EXPERIENCE

Absolute fearlessness, desirelessness, thoughtlessness, I-lessness, mine-lessness, angerlessness, Brahmic aura in the face, freedom from Harsha and Shoka are some of the signs that indicate that the man had reached the state of super-consciousness. He is also always in a state of perfect bliss. You can never see anger, depression, cheerlessness, sorrow in his face. You will find elevation, joy and peace in his presence.

Just as a drunken man is not conscious whether he has cloth on his body or not, when it is a state of dropping down in the ground, so also the Yogi who is experiencing supracosmic consciousness is not conscious of his body. A Jeevanmukta who is in the fourth Bhumika will have slight consciousness of his body in the form of a Samskara or mental retentum.

Just as a man doubts whehter his old rotten shoe is clinging to his feet or not when he is sometimes absent-minded, so also the Jeevanmukta doubts whether this body is hanging like an old rotten shoe or not. That Sannyasi or an Avadhoota who fully rests in Brahman and has no idea at all of the slightest difference between a male and a female is entitled to throw off his Kowpeen altogether. That Kowpeen also will drop by itself.

11. COMMONSENSE APPROACH

He who is naked should not live in an Ashram or a town or a village. He should roam about unknown not caring for good and cast off his body as a slough in a dung-hill or dilapidated house. So says Narada-Parivrajaka Upanishad.

To live naked in an Ashram, but to have all sorts of comforts, to have disciples and to take interest in the development of the Ashram does not look nice. It does not appeal to some sections of people at least. That Sannyasin or Mahatma who wants or keeps something for his body in an Ashram can wear also a small cloth along with his Kowpeen. This will not go against his realisation or Jeevanmukti. Physical nudity alone will not constitute real Tyaga. Some persons study the description of a Jnani in the seventh Bhumi in Viveka-Chudamani or Yoga Vasishtha and try to imitate this external state without having any internal development or attainment of that highest state of consciousness. This is a mistake. This is hypocrisy. Some Sannyasins falsely assume the state of Brahma Varishtha. They like to be fed by young ladies.

In Uttarakasi in the Himalayas a young man heard the story of Yoga Vasishtha from Swami Deva Giri wherein there was a description of a Jnani of seventh state of Jnana. This young man gave up at once food for 15 days, began to pass motions and

urine in his room and imagined that he was in the seventh stage of Jnana. An intelligent neighbour applied a plant called *Bitchu-Kata* to his body which produces severe pain like scorpion-sting. He yelled out like anything and came back to his senses. He went to the Kshettar as usual for taking alms. Is this not hypocrisy? His internal mental state has not reached the highest zenith of Brahmic consciousness. It remained in a raw, crude, unpolished state, though he externally put on the state of a Paramahansa who dwells in the absolute consciousness.

12. APPEARANCES ARE QUESTIONABLE

You will find in Kumbha Mela at Hardwar batches of Naga Sadhus, young boys marching in procession in a nude state. Are these boys Jitendriya Yogins? Is this not hypocrisy? Hypocrisy takes various forms. One should fully understand the subtle ways and workings of the mind. Mind is Maya.

If you take camphor or Hareetaki or Nux Vomica seed for some time, you will lose your power of erection in the generative organ. This does not mean that you are a Jitendriya Yogi. There are some expert old-men who give a twist to the spermatic cord and thereby paralyse the nerve erigens that causes erection of the organ. The mind remains in the same state. Passion is the same. Real Sannyasa is internal, mental nudity. The mind is absolutely free from Vasanas and Samskaras. This is the real Avadhooth state.

You cannot find the symptoms and signs of cosmic consciousness in these pseudo-Samadhistis who have shut themselves up in underground rooms. If you take the seeds of Apamarga (Nayurivi in Tamil) you will be free from hunger and thirst. The use of the Apamarga seeds for destroying hunger and thirst is as follows:—These seeds have seven subtle skins or outer husks. Dry them in the sun and rub them on the hands. Take 1/8th of a seer of this seed. Make Kheer of this seed with milk and sugar and

drink. Take a purgative to start with. Live on milk for two days. Take an enema also. All old faecal matter should be evacuated. You will have pleasant sensations and feelings of joy. There will be neither hunger nor thirst. There are two varieties of Apamarga seeds. The red one is better.

There is another plant or grass that is obtainable on the way to Kailas. It grows on rocks. You will have to pluck this before sunrise. You can be free from hunger for six months. The pseudo-Samadhist use these seeds and roots. When they come out of the room they are the same persons with worldly Vasanas and Samskaras. They are talkative and Rajasic.

13. RAMACHARAKA'S VIEWS ON COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS

Yogi Ramacharaka writes about cosmic consciousness in his book *Raja Yoga* as follows:—"There is a stage still higher than this last mentioned, but it has come to but very few of the race. Reports of it come from all times, races, countries. It has been called "Cosmic Consciousness" and is described as an awareness of the Oneness of Life—that is, a consciousness that the Universe is filled with one Life, an actual perception and "awareness" that the universe is full of life, motion, and mind, and that there is no such thing as Blind Force or Dead Matter, but that all is alive, vibrating and intelligent. That is, of course, that the Real Universe, which is the Essence or Background of the Universe of Matter, Energy and Mind, is as they describe. In fact, the description of those who have had glimpses of this state would indicate that they see the Universe as All-Mind—that all is Mind at the last. This form of consciousness has been experienced by men here and there—only a few—in moments of "illumination" the period lasting but a very short space of time, then fading away, leaving but a memory. In the moment of "illumination" there came to those experiencing it a sense of "in-touch-ness" with Universal knowledge and Life, impossible to describe accompanied by a joy beyond understanding.

"Regarding this last, "Cosmic Consciousness" we would state that it means more than an intellectual conviction, belief or realisation of the facts as stated, for an actual vision and consciousness of these things came in the moment of illumination. Some others report that they have a deep abiding sense of reality of the facts described by the report of the illumined, but have not experienced the "vision" or ecstasy referred to. These last people seem to have with them always the same mental state as that possessed by those who had the "vision" and passed out of it, carrying with them the remembrance and feeling, but not the actual consciousness attained at the moment. They agree upon the essential particulars of the reports. Dr. Maurice Bucke, now passed out of this plane of life, wrote a book entitled "Cosmic Consciousness" in which he describes a number of these cases, including his own, Walt Whitman's and others, and in which he holds that this stage of consciousness is before the race and will gradually come to it in the future. He holds that the manifestation of it which has come to some few of the race, as above stated, is but the first beams of the sun which are flashing upon us and which are but prophecies of the appearance of the great body of light itself.

"We shall not here consider at length the reports of certain great religious personages of the past, who have left records that in moments of great spiritual exaltation they became conscious of "being in the presence of the Absolute" or perhaps within the

radius of the "light of Its countenance." We have great respect for these reports and have every reason for believing many of them authentic, notwithstanding the conflicting reports that have been handed down to us by those who had these glimpses of consciousness were not prepared or trained to fully understand the nature of the phenomena. They found themselves in the spiritual presence of something of awful grandeur and spiritual rank and were completely dazed and bewildered at the sight. They did not understand the nature of Absolute and when they had sufficiently recovered they reported that they had been in the "presence of God," the word "God" meaning their particular conception of Deity—that is the one appearing as Deity in their own particular religious creed or school. They saw nothing to cause them to identify this something with their particular conception of Deity, except that they thought that "it must be God" and knowing no other God except their own particular conception, they naturally identifying the Something with "God" as they conceived Him to be. And their reports naturally were along these lines.

"Thus the reports of all religions are filled with accounts of the so-called miraculous occurrences. The Catholic saint reports that he "saw the light of God's countenance," and the non-catholic reports likewise regarding God as he knows Him. The Mohammedan reports that he caught a glimpse of the face of Allah and the Buddhist tells us that he saw Buddha under the Tree. The Brahmin has seen

the face of Brahma, and the various Hindu sects have men who give similar reports regarding their own particular deities. The Persians have given similar reports and even the ancient Egyptians have left records of similar occurrences. These conflicting reports have led to the belief, on the part of those who did not understand the nature of the phenomenon, that these things were "all imagination" and fancy, if indeed not rank falsehood and imposture. But the Yogins know better than this. They know that underneath all these varying reports there is a common ground of truth, which will be apparent to anyone investigating the matter. They know that all of these reports (except a few based upon fraudulent imitations of the real phenomenon) are based upon truth and are but the bewildered reports of the various observers. They know that these people were temporarily lifted above the ordinary plane of consciousness and were made aware of the existence of consciousness and were made aware of the existence of a Being or Beings higher than mortal. It does not follow that they saw "God" or the Absolute, for there are many beings of high spiritual growth and development that would appear to the ordinary mortal as a very God. The Catholic doctrine of Angels and Archangels is corroborated by those among the Yogins who have been "behind the veil" and they give us reports of the "Devas" and other advanced Beings. So the Yogi accepts these reports of the various mystics, saints and inspired ones, and accounts for them all by laws perfectly natural to the

students of the Yoga Philosophy, but which appear as super-natural to those who have not studied along these lines.

"But we cannot speak further of this phase of the subject in this lesson, for a full discussion of it would lead us far away from the phase of the general subject before us. But we wish to be understood as saying that there are certain centres in the mental being of man from which may come light regarding the existence of the Absolute and higher order of Beings. In fact, from these centres come to man that part of his mental "feelings" that he calls "the religious instinct or intuition." Man does not arrive at that underlying consciousness of "Something. Beyond by means of his intellect—it is the glimmer of light coming from the higher centres of the Self. He notices these gleams of light, but not understanding them, he proceeds to erect elaborate theological and creedal structures to account for them the work of the intellect, however, always lacking that "feeling" that the intuition itself possesses. True religion, no matter under what name it may masquerade, comes from the "heart" and is not comforted or satisfied with these intellectual explanations, and hence comes that unrest and craving for satisfaction which comes to Man when the light begins to break through. "Miss Laurie Bratt of America writes about an experience in cosmic consciousness in "The Hindu Mind" as follows: "The Hindus have written much on cosmic consciousness but in the West this subject is much less known. However,

those who have read Doctor Bucke's Cosmic Consciousness and Edward Carpenter's Towards Democracy know that these authors believe that cosmic consciousness is a natural faculty of man, and that a future race of men on this earth will be born with this faculty well developed and not merely latent as it is now. Bucke's theory is that just as man advanced from the state of simple consciousness, which he shared with the animal kingdom into a state of Self-consciousness peculiar to man alone and marked by the development of language, so he must inevitably come into a higher state of consciousness, distinguished by a cosmic or universal understanding.

'Bucke maintains that the increasing number of people who have attained some degree of cosmic consciousness in the past few centuries is proof that these persons constitute the vanguard or forerunners of the new race. Among those in the West whom Bucke believes to have had the Cosmic sense more or less well developed (in recent centuries) are St. John of the Cross, Francis Bacon, Jacob Behman, Blaise Pascal, Spinoza, Swedenborg, William Wordsworth, Alexandar Pushkin, Honore de Balzac, Emerson, Tennyson, Thoreau, Walt Whitman and Edward Carpenter. He also mentions Ramakrishna as a Hindu example.

"Besides these famous men it is doubtless true that many hundreds of men and women in each country, unknown to fame, have been exalted to some degree of cosmic consciousness. There is no

doubt in my mind that the message brought to America by Hindu teachers in recent years has been the means by which hundreds and perhaps thousands of Americans have achieved, through the meditation practices taught by them, a glimpse of divine consciousness. Some few students have gone further, and attained very high illumination. Here we have an example of how the cosmic sense is being developed in larger and larger numbers paving the way for the great race of the future."

14. BUCKE'S VIEWS

Some passages from Bucke's book is well worth quoting here: "In contact with the flux of Cosmic Consciousness all religions known and named today will be melted down. The human soul will be revolutionised. Religion will absolutely dominate the race. It will not depend on tradition. It will be believed and disbelieved. It will not be a part of life, belonging to certain hours, times and occasions. It will not be in sacred books nor in the mouths of preists. It will not dwell in churches and meetings and forms and days. Its life will not be in prayers, hymns nor discourses. It will not depend on special revelations, on the words of gods who came down to teach, nor on any Bible or Bibles. It will have no mission to save men from their sins nor to secure them entrance to heaven. It will not teach a future immortality nor future glories, for immortality and all glory exists in the here and now.

"The evidence of immortality will live in every heart as sight in every eye. Doubt of God and of eternal life will be as impossible as is now doubt of existence; the evidence of each will be same. Religion will govern every minute of every day of all life. Chruches, priests, forms, creeds, prayers, all agents, all intermediaries between the individual men and God will be permanently replaced by direct unmistakable intercourse. Sin will no longer

exist nor will salvation be desired. Men will not worry about death or a future, about the kingdom of heaven, about what may come with and after the cessation of the life, of the present body. Each soul will feel and know itself to be immortal, will feel and know that the entire universe with all its good and with all its beauty is for it and belongs to it for ever. The world peopled by men possessing Cosmic Consciousness will be as far removed from the world of today as this from the world as it was before the advent of self-consciousness. This new race is in act of being born from us and in the near future will occupy and possess the earth".

15. A DEFINITE WAY TO CONTACT GOD

"The fact that there is a technique such as Yoga practices, whereby Cosmic Consciousness can be attained is in itself proof that this higher sense is indeed an inherent faculty of all men, needing but the necessary training to call it forth. Most people believe that divine knowledge comes to only a few chosen people, and that the average man can approach no nearer to God than his "faith" will take him, Realisation that there is a definite way to contact God, a technique usable by all men in all circumstances, has come with such a liberating shock to student of Hindu spiritual science that they feel they have undergone a new birth.

"I have one such case in mind. An American man who, as soon as he had heard the Yogoda message brought to America by Swami Yogananda of Bengal was swept up into Cosmic Consciousness. This student was possessed of intense religious faith and aspiration. Though well read in the sacred scriptures of the world, especially those of the Hindu, he knew that this intellectual knowledge was barren and stony: it did not feed the soul-hunger within him. He did not wish merely to read about spiritual food, but to taste it. Under the even tenor of his days there yawned a black abyss of despair—despair that he was worthy of any direct contact with God, since no such experience was given him. He

finally came to doubt not God, but the possibility that he would ever be able to have more than an intellectual comprehension of Him. This conviction to struck at the roots of his life and made it seem a worthless and meaningless thing.

"Into this dark night of his soul came to dazzling light brought by the teacher from India. The student felt the heavy weight of despair lifting from his heart. Returning to his home one night from the last of the public lectures, he was conscious of a great peace within himself. He felt that in some deep fundamental way he had become a different person. An impulse urged him to look into a mirror in his room, that he might see the new man. There he saw not his own face, but the face of the Hindu teacher whose lecture he had attended that evening."

"The flood-gate of joy broke in his soul; he was inundated with waves of indescribable ecstasy. Words that had been merely words to him before—bliss, immortality, eternity, truth, divine love—became, in the twinkling of an eye, the core of his being, the essence of his life, the only possible reality. Realisation that these deep, everlasting founts of joy existed in every heart, that this immortal life underlay all the mortality of humanity, that this eternal, all-inclusive love enveloped and supported and guided every particle, every atom of creation burst upon him with a surety and divine certainty that caused his whole being to pour forth in a flood of praise and gratitude.

"He knew not with his mind alone, but with his heart and soul, with every cell and molecule of his body. The sublime splendour and joy of this discovery were so vast that he felt that centuries, millenniums, countless aeons of suffering were as nothing, as less than nothing, if by such means that bliss could be obtained. Sin, sorrow death—these were but words now, words without meaning, words swallowed up by joy as minnows by the seven seas.

PHYSIOLOGICAL CHANGES

"He was aware, during this first period of illumination and during the months which followed of a number of physiological changes within himself. The most striking was what seemed of an arrangement of molecular structure in his brain or the opening up of new cell-territory there. Ceaselessly, day and night, he was conscious of this work going on. It seemed as though a kind of electrical drill was boring out new cellular thought-channels. This phenomenon is strong proof of Bucke's theory that Cosmic Consciousness is a natural faculty of man for it gives evidence that the brain cells which are connected with this faculty are already present in man, although inactive or non-functioning in the majority of human beings at the present time.

"Another important change was felt in his spinal column. The whole spine seemed turned into iron for several months, so that, when he sat to meditate on God, he felt anchored for ever, able to sit in one place eternally without motion or consciousness of any bodily function. At times an influx of super-human strength invaded him and he felt that he was carrying the whole universe on his shoulders. The elixir of life, the nectar of immortality, he felt flowing in his veins as an actual, tangible force. It seemed like a quicksilver or a sort of electrical, fluid light throughout his body.

17. THE EVERLASTING AIMS

During the months of his illumination, he felt no need of food or sleep. But he conformed his outward life to the pattern of his household and ate and slept when his family did. All food seemed pure spirit to him, and in sleep he was pillowed on the "Everlasting arms" awakening to a joy past all words, past all powers to description.

"He had previously suffered from heavy colds and had been a constant smoker; now his body was purged of all sickness, and desire for cigarette was wiped completely from his consciousness. His family and friends were aware of a great change in his appearance and manner; his face shone with a radiant light; his eyes were pools of joy. Strangers spoke to him irresistibly drawn by a strange sympathy; on the street-car, children would come over to sit on his lap, asking him to visit them.

"The whole Universe was to him bathed in a sea of love he said to himself many times: "Now at last I know what Love is! This is God's love, love, unconquerable love, all satisfying love." He knew beyond all possibility or thought of doubt that love creates and sustains the universe, and that all created things human or sub-human were destined to discover this Love, this immortal bliss that is the very essence of life. He felt his mind expand, his understanding reach out, endlessly widening, grow-

ing, touching, every thing in the Universe, binding all things, all thoughts to himself. He was "centre everywhere, circumference nowhere."

"The air that he breathed was friendly, intimate, conscious of life. He felt all the world was "home" to him, that he could never feel strange or alien to any place again; that the mountains, the sea, the distant lands which he had never seen, would be as much his own as the home of his boyhood. Everywhere, he looked, he saw the "atom dance" of nature; the air was filled with myrial moving pin-pricks of light.

"During these months, he went about his daily duties as usual but with a hitherto unknown efficiency and speed. He was a student at college during this period, and passed all his examinations without looking at a text-book. His mind was bathed in a sea of knowledge: Typed papers flew off his machine, complete without error in a fourth of his customary time. Fatigue was unknown to him; his work seemed like child's play, happy and carefree. Conversing in person or over the telephone on any business, his inward joy covered every action and circumstance with a cosmic significance, for to him, this telephone, this table, this voice was God, God manifesting Himself in another of His fascinating disguise.

"In the midst of his work, he would suddenly be freshly overwhelmed by the goodness of God who has given him this incredible, inspeakable happi-

ness. His breath would stop completely at such times; the awe which he felt would be accompanied by an absolute stillness within and without. Time and space were swallowed up, gone without trace like all unreality. Underlying all his consciousness was a sense of immeasurable and unutterable gratitude; a longing for others to know the joy which lay within them; but most of all, a divine knowledge, past all human comprehension, that all was well with the world, that everything was leading to the goal of Cosmic Consciousness, immortal bliss.

One can well imagine, with Doctor Bucke that a race of men possessing, as a normal and permanent faculty, this sense of Cosmic Consciousness would soon turn the earth into a Paradise, a planet fit for Christs and Buddhas, and a pole star for the wheeling universe.

In the Upanishads he who has experience in Cosmic Consciousness is called "Sarvavid" i.e., one who knows everything in detail

May we all attain the state of Cosmic Consciousness, our birth-right, centre, ideal and goal. He is an inexhaustible spiritual wealth. Here is a spiritual treasure which no dacoits can plunder. The unemployment problem is solved now. The miseries of the world are removed now. You will have a glorious and brilliant life which is ineffable. You will have neither wants nor desires, neither torments nor anxieties, neither worries, nor fear. You will attain immortality and everlasting bliss. Drink the

nectar of immortality and attain the everlasting abode of peace and Immortality which was attained by Tukkaram, Tulsidas, Ramdas, Mira, Kabir, Prahlada and Dhruva of yore.

May the fire of devotion grow brighter in you all. May Lord Krishna bestow on you spiritual strength to control the Indriyas and the restless mind ! May the blessings of Bhagawatas be upon you.

18. NON-DUAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Today I will talk to you on Non-dual Consciousness. This is the consciousness of Suddha Satchidananda Para Brahman. It is above Cosmic Consciousness. Arjuna had Cosmic Consciousness. Hiranyagarbha has Cosmic Consciousness. But this Non-dual Consciousness is above Cosmic Consciousness. It is Nirvikalpa Samadhi of Vedantins. It is Asamprajnata Samadhi of Raja Yogins. In this Samadhi there is no Triputi, the triad, seer-sight-seen, knower-knowledge-knowable, meditator-meditation-meditated or the object of meditation. There is nothing here. There is no Triputi. It is Christ Consciousness. There are no names and forms. There is no sound or colour. There is neither matter nor energy. It is pure Absolute Consciousness, consciousness *per se*. Jesus said, "The Kingdom of God is within you." The Kingdom of God is not a place, but a state of consciousness. It is the Non-Dual Consciousness, wherein the mind, senses and the intellect cease functioning. It is the realm of intuition.

In deep sleep also there are no names and forms. It is like a glimpse of the Non-dual Consciousness, but there is ignorance, Avidya, Karana Sareera, Anandamaya Kosha.

In Vedanta, there are two kinds of Samadhis,—
Adwaita Bhavanarupa Samadhi and Adwaita

Awastharupa Samadhi. The aspirant meditates on the formula 'Aham Brahmasmi' or 'Tatwamasi', the great Maha Vakyas of the Upanishads. In the beginning stage it is called Adwaita Bhavanarupa stage. He tries to identify himself with the Non-dual Consciousness, but later on through deep meditation and constant Nididhyasan when he is established in his own Satchidanandaswaroop, it is called Adwaita Avastharupa Samadhi. He is fully established in Non-dual Consciousness. There are no names and forms, matter and energy. The thing-in-itself, the Transcendent, alone remains. Sri Sankara and Dattatreya had this experience. Madalasa had this experience. She sang the song "Suddhosi, Buddhosi, Niranjanos, Samsara-Maya Parivarjitosi" to her children in the cradle and made them Jeevanmuktas, Liberated Sages. 'Suddhosi'—You are pure, O children. 'Buddhosi'—You are full of knowledge, 'Niranjanos'—You are spotless,—no lust, no greed, no Asubha Vasanas. 'Samsaramaya-parivarjitosi'—not touched by Maya. This Maya cannot touch you, Avidya cannot touch you. You are pure, eternal, immortal Atman. Yajnavalkya had this experience. Vamadeva had this experience. Even when he was dwelling in the womb of his mother, he attained Illumination. Chudalai had this experience. She was a sage and Yogi. She had powers. She walked in the sky and appeared before her husband. She stood above the ground and taught him Brahma Vidya. Sulabha also was a sage and Jnani. She approached Janaka and entered

his body through her Yogic power. He did not like Dandi Swamis. She was a Dandi Swami. She wanted to teach him a lesson. Through her Yogic power she entered in his astral body, and he charged that Sulabha, as a Sanyasini, should not have entered the body of a male. She taught him a lesson "You still have the consciousness of sex, male and female. You have not attained the highest illumination." Uddalaka had his experience of Non-dual Consciousness. He taught his disciple Svetaketu in different ways, the knowledge of Brahman. Ashtavakra was a great sage of illumination. He has written Ashtavakra Gita, which is soul-elevating. It raises you to supreme height of Brahmic splendour. Vyasa, Vasishtha, Sukadev, Gowdapada. Govindapada, Sanak, Sanandana, Sanatkumara, Sanatsujata, Hastamalaka, Padmapada, Trotakacharya, Sureswaracharya, Pattinattar, Appayya Deekshit, Neelakantha Deekshit, Sankarananda, Vidyaranya, Sadasiva Brahmendra, Jada Bharata, Akalkot Swami,—all of them had the experience of Non-dual Consciousness.

There are various kinds of Vakyas given in the Upanishads: "Prajnanam Brahma", "Aham Brahmasmi", "Tatwamasi", "Ayamatma Brahma". The first is Lakshanabodha Vakya of Brahman. What is this Brahman?

It is pure consciousness. Then comes "Tatwamasi" Upadesavakya. The teacher instructs the student, "Thou art That," "You are not the body and mind. You are beyond Avidya and all illusory names and

forms. If you sublimate Avidya and Maya, remove evil Vrittis and give up body-identification, you rest in your own Swaroopa." Then the student begins to meditate on 'Aham Brahmasmi' formula. This is Anusandhana Vakya. Then comes "Ayanama Brahma"—This Atman is identical with Para Brahman. This is Anubhava Vakya.

There is another kind of Vakya in the Upanishad. It is called Avantara Vakya. In the plantain tree before you get the fruits, you utilise the leaves, the stem and the flower. This is called 'Avantara'—"in the interval", before you get the fruits, you utilise the leaves flower and the stem. Even so before you attain the fullest Illumination, you meditate on "Satchidananda," "Satyam, Jnanam, Anantam Brahma." Brahman is "Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute" "Satyam"—truth, "Jnanam"—wisdom, "Anantam"—infinity.

Then there are Abhedabodha Vakyas, the great sentences which treat of the identity of the individual soul and the Supreme Soul. Dattatreya says in his Avadhoota Gita, "Vedantasarasarvaswam Jnanam Vijnanameva cha, Ahamatma Nirakarah Sarvavyapee Swabhavatah"—'I am the all-pervading, formless Self. This is the essence of Vedanta'. "Ahamatma Nirakarah Sarvavyapee Swabhavatah"—you can meditate on this formula. There are various Abhedabodha Vakyas and each aspirant may like one formula or another.

Bhooma, Sadasiva, Chaitanya. Chaitanya is that

which knows itself and knows others also. Jada is that which does not know itself and does know others also. "Aham Sakshi"—I am the silent witness of the mind, intellect and the senses. "Avasthatrayasakshi"—I am the witness of the three states. This is another beautiful formula. "Sivoham, Sivoham, Siva Kevaloham". "Siva" here means Para Brahman only, and not the Siva with trident. "Soham"—"I am He." This is another beautiful formula. "I am He, He is I"—"Hamsa Soham, Soham Hamsa". There is greater force when we repeat a formula both in its original order and in its reverse order, just as "God is Love, Love is God", "God is Truth, Truth is God". There was a sage, a contemporary of Sri Ramana Maharshi,—Seshadrishwami. He liked this formula. "Hamsa Soham, Soham Hamsa".

I sing the formula :

"Sivoham, Sivoham, Sivoham, Soham,
Sat-Chit-Ananda Swaroopoham "

This is a very beautiful formula. Any formula you can select for constant Nididhyaasana and meditation. "Sat-Chit-Ananda" is a prop for the mind to lean upon.

There are four fundamental vital verses in the Avadhoota Gita, of Dattatreya. He gives in it his own experience. It will be very useful for Vedantic students to meditate on those formulas. These verses are :

Janma mrityurna te chittam bandhamokshow
subhasubhow

Katham rodishi re vatsa nama rupam na te
na me.

Why do you weep, my child? There are no names and forms in you. There is neither bondage nor liberation, neither good nor evil. Stand up Gird up your loins. Fight with the mind and the senses and rest in your own Satchidananda Swaroopa There are no names and forms. The world is not in you. It is only a Sankalpa.

Ahamevavyayonantah suddhavijnanavigraha,
Sukham dukham na janami katham kasyapi

variate.

I am Avyaya—imperishable, Ananta—infinite, Suddha Vijnana Vigraha a mass of pure consciousness, Prajnana Ghana, Ananda Ghana A mountain is not so solid as the mass of knowledge. The physical mountain appears as solid, but this wisdom, knowledge of Atma, is more solid, huge, than the Himalayas. So it is called Prajnanaghana, Ananda Ghana, Vijnanaghana, Chidghana. I do not know what is pleasure and what is pain.

Na manasam karma subhasubham me
Na vachikam karma subhasubham me
Na kayikam karma Subhasubhama me
Jnanamritam suddhamateendriyoham

Meditate on this third verse. You will free yourself from the bondage of Karmas. The mental

actions are not in you. The actions of the body are not in you. The actions of speech are not in you. Puritty, Nectar, beyond the reach of the senses—this is your divine, essential, Brahmic nature.

Then he denies the whole world. He who is established in his own Swaroopa, to him the names and forms and the world vanish

Mahadaadi jagatsarvam na kinchit pratibhaati me,
Brahmaiva kevalam sarvam katham
varnaashramasthitih.

Mahat is the first manifestation of the Absolute. Then sprang up the mind, the senses, the Tanmatras, the five elements. The quintuplication of the elements gave rise to the world. Where is Varna, where are the Ashramas, the four kinds of orders? Everything is Brahman. There is no world. This is the highest experience of a sage or a Jnani.

Therefore, let us try to enter into this Non-dual Consciousness through equipping ourselves with the four means of salvation, by hearing the Srutis, reflection and meditation. Let us practise constant Nididhyasana and meditation on these formulas and attain the state of Jeevanmukti and highest Illumination and rest in our Swaroopa and radiate joy and peace and bliss to all those who come in contact with us, and radiate peace and joy and bliss to the different corners of the whole world.

CHAPTER THREE
EXPERIENCES IN MEDITATION

CHAPTER THREE

EXPERIENCES IN MEDITATION

COMMON EXPERIENCE IN MEDITATION

In the beginning of meditation, lights of various colours, such as red, white, blue, green, a mixture of red and green light etc., appear in the forehead. They are Tanmatric lights. Every Tattwa has its own hue. Prithvi Tattwa has yellow colour. Apastattwa has white colour. Agni has red colour. Vayu has green colour. Akasa has blue colour. The coloured lights are due to these Tattwas.

Sometimes a big sun or moon, or lightning-like flashes appear in front of the forehead during meditation. Do not mind these appearances. Shun them. Try to dive deep into the source of these lights.

Sometimes Devas, Rishis, Nitya Siddhas will appear in meditation. Receive them with honour. Bow to them. Get advice from them. They appear before you to help and give you encouragement.

In the beginning of meditation and concentration you will see in the centre of the forehead a resplendent flashing light. This will last for half or one minute and then disappear. The light will flash either from above or sideways. Sometimes a sun of 6 inches or 8 inches in diameter with or without rays will be seen. You will see the form of your Guru or Upasya Murti also.

When you get glimpses of the Self, when you see the blazing light, when you get some other

extraordinary spiritual experiences, do not fall back in terror. Do not give up the Sadhana. Do not mistake them for a phantom. Be brave. March boldly with joy.

During meditation you will have no idea of time. You will not hear any sounds. You will have no idea of environments. You will forget your name and all sorts of relationship with others. You will enjoy peace and bliss. Gradually you will rest in Samadhi.

In the beginning, one remains in a state of bliss for sometime. He comes down. By constant practice of incessant meditation, he continues to remain in that exalted state for ever. Later on, the body-idea completely vanishes.

When you enter into deep meditation, you will have no consciousness of your body or surroundings. You will have equanimity of mind. You will not hear any sounds. There will be stoppage of up-going and down-going sensations. The consciousness of egoism will also gradually vanish. You will experience inexplicable joy and indescribable happiness. Gradually reasoning and reflection also will cease.

When you enter the silence through deep meditation, the world outside and all your troubles will drop away. You will enjoy supreme peace. In this silence is supreme light of lights. In this silence is undecaying bliss. In this silence is real strength and joy.

When you practise rigorous meditation, Kevala Kumbhak or natural retention of breath without Purak (inhalation) and Rechak (exhalation) will come by itself. When Kevala Kumbhak comes, you will enjoy immense peace and you will have one-pointed mind.

The visions of Rishis concerning the soul and such other transcendental matters, manifest themselves to one who is devoted to constant duties prescribed by the Srutis, and the Smritis, who is unselfish and who seeks to know the supreme Brahman.

During deep meditation one forgets the external world and then the body.

The feeling of rising up during meditation is a sign that indicates that you are going above body-consciousness. You will feel a peculiar Ananda or bliss also when you experience this feeling. In the beginning this feeling of rising up will last for a minute only. After a minute you will feel that you have come back to normal consciousness again.

You will enjoy a sort of higher type of indescribable peace during your meditation. But it will take a long time to get real spiritual experience or merge the mind in your Lakshya or chosen object of meditation or get over body-consciousness completely. Be patient. Persevere. You will be successful.

During meditation the mind becomes calm, serene and steady. The various rays of the mind are

collected and focused in the object of meditation. The mind is centred on the Lakshya. There will be no tossing of the mind. One idea occupies the mind. The whole energy of the mind is concentrated on that one idea. The senses become still. They do not function. Where there is deep concentration, there is no consciousness of the body and surroundings. He who has good concentration can visualise the picture of the Lord very clearly within the twinkling of the eye.

When your meditation becomes deep you will lose consciousness of the body. You will feel that there is no body. You will experience immense joy. There will be mental consciousness. Some lose sensation in the legs, then in the spinal column, in the trunk and the hands. When the sensation is lost in these parts, they feel that the head is suspended in the air. The mind may try to run back in the body.

During meditation you will see small pin-points of light. These will begin to grow and will become as big as the sun if you continue your practice. You will behold luminous divine forms of Sri Krishna, Vishnu, Lakshmi, Kali, Ganesh, Ram and others. You will see beautiful scenes of gardens and buildings. When you repeat the Gayatri Mantra or any other Mantra you will feel a spiritual current going to the anus region or Muladhara Chakra. Then the currents will go to the head also. You will feel great joy. Your heart will be filled with intense love. You will feel that a powerful spiritual current is going up along the spine during meditation.

You will feel that power is radiating from you. Your consciousness will be deeper now. Thoughts of God will start the spiritual currents in the body. Do not check these currents. If heat is produced in the head, apply butter, Amalaka or Brahmi oil. Take cold bath three times during summer. Take butter and sugar-candy.

Sometimes you will feel the presence of your Ishtam near you. The image will begin to appear as living when you practise regular meditation. While meditating with closed eyes on the image placed in your heart, you will find that the image is becoming more and more luminous. Even with open eyes you will see a bright sun or moon. You will see lights of different colours.

You will experience a great upward pull on the anus and the lower end of the spine. Sometimes you will feel great tingling sensation at the lower end of the spine. You will feel as though some great change in your system will happen soon.

In dream you will feel that you are trying to come out of your body. You will feel great pressure at the end of the spine.

When you meditate with closed eyes, you will see in your body two luminous strings in which are placed luminous lotuses at intervals and the strings passed through the image of your Ishtam seated in one of these lotuses in the region of the heart.

The entrance into the higher meditative life depends on the grace of God.

The higher meditative life demands tremendous humility, serenity and courage.

In higher meditative life the senses and the mind are completely subdued. There is no more use of the mind, emotions and imaginations.

The Yogi withdraws himself completely in higher meditation and enters into the state of consciousness above the mind and intellect. He is conscious only of pure being.

In Samadhi or the superconscious state the Yogi abandons the sense of his own being and enters only into the Being of God.

Spiritual experience will come to you when you are ready, but not before.

There is inner unfolding from level to level in your spiritual experience. Wait patiently. Plod on in your Sadhana with purity and courage.

Like draws like in your spiritual journey. You are never really left alone. You will get help from Yogins and Saints internally, from different parts of the worlds. Their spiritual vibrations will elevate and inspire you.

Meditate and enter into the realm of radiant light. There are no limitations here. There is no worry. There are no obstacles here. There is no time or space. In this holy realm there is no fear, no doubt, no indecision. It is all eternal joy, bliss, peace and happiness.

Continue your meditation. You will feel that your anus and a spot in top of the head are connected by these strings. You may feel that you will

lose your physical consciousness. Be not afraid. Be bold and courageous. You will have rare spiritual experience. You will have cosmic vision. Do not open your eyes now. You will come back to normal consciousness

Pure emotions will rise in your heart. You will begin to love every creature. You will feel that the whole world is nothing, but pure consciousness. The tables, chairs, men, women and other things will all appear to contain this consciousness, just as vessels contain their contents. You will feel that all things are made of this consciousness. This rare experience will give you great bliss. You will feel that the Lord is sporting in all things as this pure consciousness. You will actually lose the sense of material nature of things around you.

You will have Sakar realisation and Bhav Samadhi at the Anahata Chakra. You will experience Nirvikalpa Samadhi at Sahasrara.

May you all attain the exalted state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi through regular and constant meditation.

20. VARIOUS KINDS OF VISIONS IN MEDITATION

Visions and experiences come and go. They are not in themselves the culminating point in the Sadhana. He who attaches much importance to these small visions does not march swiftly on the path. Therefore abandon the idea of these experiences. The final experience, intuitional and direct, of the Supreme alone is the true one.

Rise above the visions. The vision that you see in meditation is a hindrance on the path to Samadhi or God-realisation. When you see them, the mind will be fixed on these visions throughout the day instead of on God. Avoid these visions and the thoughts of them. Be indifferent. Substitute the thought of the Lord.

At times you will see some lustrous forms of Devatas or some other physical forms. You will see your Ishta-devata or your Guru, Siddhas, Rishis and others give their Darshan to encourage you. You can see beautiful gardens, palatial buildings, rivers, mountains, golden temples, sceneries so lovely and picturesque as cannot be adequately described.

During intense concentration, many are able to feel certain peculiar sensations as if some electric current passed from the Muladhara Chakra. They immediately disturb their body and come down to the physical consciousness out of fear. They need

have no fear at all. They should keep steady and wait for further experience.

Experiences vary in different individuals. The experience of one man may not be the same as that of another man. Many erroneously believe that they have realised the Self when they get these experiences, stop their Sadhana and try to move with the public to preach and do Lokasangraha. This is a serious blunder. This not realisation at all. These are all simple encouragements from your Ishta Devata to convince you of a higher spiritual life and push you in your systematic and incessant practice with zeal and enthusiasm. You will have to ignore these things and drive them away just as you did with worldly objects. You must not care a bit when you get these visions. You must have your Lakshya on the goal. The visions may appear in some persons within a few days, while others within six or nine months. It depends upon the state of the mind and degree of concentration. Some persons may not have such experience, but they will be progressing in the spiritual path.

Visions are either subjective or objective, your own mental creations or of realities on finer planes of matter. Universe consists of planes of matter of various degrees of density. Rhythmical vibrations of Tanmatras in various degrees give rise to the formation of various planes. Visions may be of these things or beings. Or in many cases they may be purely imaginary. They may be the crystallisa-

tion of your own intense thinking. You must discriminate well.

You will sometimes see a vast bright golden light. Within the light you will see your Ishta Devata in front. Sometimes you will see yourself within the light. You will see a golden-coloured light all around.

You may see your Ishta Devata as big as a mountain shining like the sun. You may see the figure during eating, drinking and working. When you enjoy the bliss of this vision, you will experience no taste for food while eating. You will simply swallow the food. You will hear continuous ringing of the Veena. You may see the blazing light of the sun.

The object of your meditation will come before you much quicker if you practise regular meditation. You will feel as if you are covered by the object on which you meditate. You will see as if the whole space is illumined. Sometimes you will experience the sound of ringing bells. You will feel the inner peace of the Soul.

When you get these experiences, when you behold these visions, you will feel peculiar, indescribable bliss. Do not get false contentment. Do not stop your Sadhana. Do not attach much importance to these visions. You have attained only the first degree of concentration. The highest goal or realisation is profound Silence or Supreme Peace, wherein all thoughts cease and you become identical with the Supreme Self.

The beings and objects with whom you are in touch during early period of meditation belong to the astral world. They are similar to human beings minus a physical overcoat. They have desires, cravings, love, hatred, etc., just as human beings have. They have a fine body. They can move about freely. They have powers of materialisation, dematerialisation, multiplying, clairvoyant vision of an inferior order. The lustrous forms are higher Devatas of mental or higher planes, who come down to give you Darshan, and encourage you. Various Saktis manifest in lustrous forms. Adore them. Worship them. Do mental Pooja as soon as they give you Darshan. Angels are beings of mental or higher planes. They also appear before your mind's eye.

Sometimes, you will feel an invisible help, possibly from your Ishta Devata when you are actually pushed from the physical body into the new plane. That invisible power assists in your separating from the body and going above body-consciousness. You will have to mark carefully all these operations.

Don't waste your time in looking at these visions. This is only a curiosity. These are all encouragements to convince you of the existence of super-physical, metaphysical realities and the solid existence of Brahman. Fix yourself on the Goal—Lakshya. Advance. Proceed seriously and energetically.

Sometimes, during meditation, you will see an infinite blue sky, ethereal space. You will see your

self in the blue space as a black dot. Your form will appear in the centre of the higher vibratory, rotating particles in the light. You will see physical forms human forms, children, women, adult males, Rishis, with beards, Siddhas and lustrous, Tejomaya forms also. Visions are either subjective or objective, your own mental reactions or of realities on finer planes of matter. Universe consists of planes of matter of various grades of density. Rhythmical vibrations of Tanmatras in various degrees, give rise to the formation of various planes. Each plane has its beings and things. Visions may be of these things or beings. They may be purely imaginary. They may be crystallisation of your own intense thinking. You must discriminate in Yogic practices. Reason and commonsense must be used all throughout.

During meditation you will have no body-consciousness. Even if there be body-consciousness, it will be in the form of a mental retentum. A drunkard may not have full consciousness that he has a cloth round his body. He may feel that something is loosely hanging from his body. Even so, you will have a feeling of the body. You will feel that something is sticking to you like a loose cloth or loose shoes.

The aspirant during meditation will see balls of white coloured lights, sun, stars. He will experience divine taste and divine fragrance. He may have visions of the Lord in human form—as an old man, a leper, an outcast in rags. He may have visions of the Guru, of sages and saints.

The visions may appear within a few days or in others within six or nine months depending upon the degree of concentration and mental purity. Some persons may not have such experience but they will be progressing in the spiritual path.

Psychic powers have no proper place in spiritual life. You will have to shun them ruthlessly even if they manifest during the course of your spiritual practices. Siddhis roll under the feet of that Yogic student who has controlled the senses and who practises concentration. The Siddhis are hindrances to realisation.

High spiritual experiences have nothing to do with colours or sounds. There should be inner joy, peace and poise. There should be balance of mind in success and failure, pleasure and pain, honour and dishonour. Attraction and repulsion should vanish. There should be cosmic love. The whole world should become the manifestation of the Lord. There should be freedom from all kinds of fears and pains. This is the real nature of high spiritual experiences.

21. EXPERIENCE OF JERKS

In the beginning of your practice, you may get jerks of hands, legs, trunk and whole body. Sometimes the jerk is very terrible. Do not be afraid. Do not be troubled. It is nothing. It can do nothing. It is due to sudden muscular contraction from new Pranic influence, new nerve stimuli. Remember that new nerve-currents are formed now owing to the purification of Nadis from Sadhana. The jerks will pass off after some time. At times there is tremor of the body during meditation. This is due to the Prana being taken up to the brain in the process of meditation from the trunk, etc. Do not be afraid. Do not stop the meditation. You will have to pass through all these stages. When you get these, you are improving. You are progressing. Plod on and persevere. Be cheerful. Help is from within, from the Antaryamin, from the Sakshi, from Kutastha-Pratyag Atman. These are all new sensations. During meditation some people draw inspiration and compose beautiful poems. Record them, if you get this poetic inspiration.

The sudden jerks in meditation come especially when the Prana becomes slow and the outward vibrations make the mind come down from its union with the Lord to the level of physical consciousness.

The mind becomes very subtle by the practice of meditation and thinking also gets developed.

LIGHTS IN MEDITATION

Various kinds of lights manifest during meditation owing to concentration. In the beginning, a bright white light, the size of a pin's point will appear in the forehead in the Trikuti, the space between the two eyebrows, which corresponds tentatively to the Ajna Chakra of the astral body. You will notice, when the eyes are closed, different coloured lights, flashes like lightning, like fire, burning charcoal, fire-flies, moon, sun, stars. These lights appear in the mental space, Chidakasa. These are all Tanmtric lights. Each Tanmatra has its own specific colour.

Yellow and white lights are commonly seen. Red and blue lights are very rarely noticeable. Frequently there is a combination of white and yellow lights. In the beginning, small balls of white light float about before the mind's eye. When you first observe this, be assured that the mind is becoming more steady and that you are progressing in concentration. After some months, the size of the light will increase and you will see a full blaze of white light, bigger than the sun. In the beginning, these lights are not steady. They come and disappear immediately. They flash out from above the forehead and from the sides. They cause peculiar sensations of extreme joy, and happiness and there is an intense desire for a vision of these lights. When you have steady and

systematic practice of two to three hours in the morning and two or three hours at night, these lights appear more frequently and remain steadily for a long time. The vision of the lights is a great encouragement, in Sadhana. It impels you to stick steadily to meditation. It gives you strong faith also in superphysical matters. The appearance of the light denotes that you are transcending the physical consciousness. You are in a semi-conscious state when the light appears. You are between two planes. You must not shake the body when these lights appear. You must be perfectly steady in the Asan. You must breathe very, very slowly.

Triangle Light in the Face

One whose food is moderate, whose anger has been controlled, who has given up all love for society, who has subdued his passion, who has overcome all pairs (heat and cold), who has given up his egoism, who does not bless anyone nor takes anything from others—such a man during meditation obtains three (the triangle) in the face.

Light from Sushumna

Sometimes during meditation you will see a brilliant dazzling light. You will find it difficult to gaze on this light. You will be compelled to withdraw your mental vision of this light. This dazzling light is the light emanating from the Sushumna in the heart.

Forms in the Lights

You will see two kinds of forms (1) lustrous forms of Devatas, (2) physical forms. You will see your

Ishta Devata or tutelary deity (guiding Devata) in handsome dress and with various, valuable ornaments, flowers, garlands, and with four hands and weapons. Siddhas, Rishis, etc., appear to encourage you. You will find a huge collection of Devatas and celestial ladies with various musical instruments in their hands. You will see beautiful flower gardens, fine palatial buildings, rivers, mountains, golden temples, sceneries, so lovely and picturesque as cannot be adequately described.

Dazzling Light

Sometimes, during meditation, you will get very powerful dazzling lights, bigger than the sun. They are white. In the beginning, they come and fade away quickly. Later on, they are steady, they become fixed for 10, 15 minutes or half an hour according to the strength and degree of concentration. For those who concentrate on the Trikuti, the space between the two eye-brows, the light appears in the forehead in the Trikuti, while for others who concentrate on the top of the head, Sahasrara Chakra, the light manifests on the top of the head. The light is so powerful and dazzling sometimes, that you have to withdraw yourself from looking inward and break the meditation. Some people are afraid and do not know what to do, how to proceed further. They came to me for instructions. I told them that it is a new sensation, which they have not hitherto experienced. By constant practice, the mind engaged in concentration will be

used to it, and the fear will vanish. I asked them to go on with the practice. Some people concentrate on the heart, some on Trikuti and some on the top of the head. It is a question of personal taste. It is easy to control mind by concentrating on the Trikuti.

23. ANAHATA SOUNDS

Anahata sounds (or the melody) are the mystic sounds heard by the Yogi at the beginning of his cycle of meditation. This subject is termed Nada-Anusandhana or an enquiry into the mystic sounds. This is a sign of purification of the Nadis or astral currents, due to Pranayama. The Anahata sound is also called Omkara Dhvani. It is due to the vibration of Prana in the heart.

Ten Kinds of Sounds

Nada that is heard is of 10 kinds. The first is Chini (like the sound of the word chini); the second is chini-chini; the third is the sound of bell; the fourth is that of conch; the fifth is that of Tantri (lute); the sixth is that sound of Tala (cymbals); the seventh is that of flute; the eight is that of Bheri (drum); the ninth is that of Mridanga (double drum) and the tenth is that of clouds, viz., thunder.

Before thou settest thy foot upon the ladder's upper rung, the ladder of the mystic sounds, thou hast to hear the voice of thy inner God (Highest Self) in 7 manners. The first is like the nightingale's sweet voice chanting a song of parting to its mate. The second comes as the sound of a silver cymbal of the Dhyanis, awakening the twinkling stars. The next is as the plaint melody of the ocean-sprite imprisoned in its shell. And this is

followed by the chant of Veena. The fifth sound of bamboo-flute shrills in thine ear. It changes next into a trumpet blast. The last vibrates like the dull rumbling of a thunder-cloud. The seventh swallows all the other sounds. They die and then are heard no more.

Ten Kinds of Sound

Before thou attaint thy foot upon the ladder's upper rung, the ladder of the mystic sounds thou hast to hear the voice of thy inner God. Highest of all is the voice of the inner God. The first is like the nightingale's sweet voice chanting a song of praise to its mate. The second comes as the sound of a silver trumpet of the Elysian, awakening the twinkling stars. The next is as the plaint melody of the reed again accompanied in its shell. And this is

24. FEELING OF SEPARATION FROM BODY AND OTHER EXPERIENCES

During the course of practice, one day you will feel that you have separated yourself from the body. You will have immense joy mixed with fear, joy in the possession of a new, light, astral body; fear owing to the entry in a foreign, unknown plane. At the very outset, the new consciousness is very rudimentary in the new plane, just as in the case of a pup with newly opened eyes on the eighth or tenth day on the physical plane. You will only feel that you have a light airy body and will perceive a rotating, vibratory limited astral atmosphere with illumination of golden lights, objects, beings, etc. You may feel you are rotating or floating in the air and consequently there is the fear of being fallen.

You will never fall; but the new experience of subtlety generates novel feeling and sensations in the beginning. How you leave the body, remains unknown at the outset. You are suddenly startled when you have completely separated, and when you enter into the new plane, sometimes with blue-coloured sphere around, sometimes with partial illumination (Prakasha) mixed with darkness while at other times with extremely brilliant golden, yellow diffused illumination. The new joy is inexpressible and indescribable in words. You will have to actually feel and experience yourself

(Anubhava). You are unaware of how you have left the body, but you are fully conscious of your returning. You gently feel as if you glide on a very very smooth surface; as if you enter smoothly, gently through a small hole or fine tube with an airy light body. You have an airy ethereal feeling. Just as air enters through the crevices of a window, you enter with the new astral body into the physical body. When you have returned, you can markedly differentiate the life in the gross and subtle planes. There is intense craving to regain the new consciousness and to remain in that state always. You are not able to stay for a period longer than 3, 5 or 10 minutes in the new region. Further, you can hardly leave the body at will, through simple willing, in the beginning. By chance, through efforts, you are able to separate from the body once a month in the course of Sadhana. If you plod on with patience, perseverance, and firmness you will be able to leave the body at will and stay for a longer time in the new plane with the new subtle body. You are quite safe from identification with the body. You have made conquest of Deha Adhyasa, only if you can leave the body at will and only if you are able to stay in the new region for 2 or 3 hours. Your position is quite secure then and not otherwise. Mouna or the vow of silence, solitude, living alone are *sine qua non* to achieve this.

Astral Journey

You can simply by mere willing travel to any place you like with the body (astral travel, astral journey)

and there materialise by drawing the necessary materials either from Asmita (Ahankara) or the universal store-house—ocean of Tanmatras. The process is very simple to Yogins who know the rationale, the detailed technique of the various operations.

Materialisation

You first separate yourself from the body, then you identify yourself with the mind and then, you function on the mental plane with this fine body, just as you do on this earth plane. Through concentration, you rise above body-consciousness; through meditation, you rise above mind and finally through Samadhi, you become one with Brahman.

Mind Moves

After a short practice of meditation, you will feel that body gets lighter in a short time. say 15 or 30 minutes after you have taken your seat on Padma, Siddha, or Sukhasana according to taste and temperament. You may be semi-conscious of the body also. There is great deal of happiness owing to concentration. This is happiness resulting from concentration—concentration-Ananda—which is quite different from sensual pleasures. You must be able to differentiate these two pleasures through Buddhi, rendered subtle by constant Abhyasa, meditation.

You can distinctly feel that the mind is moving, that it is leaving its seat on the brain and that it is trying to go to its Yathasthana, original state You

know that it has left its old groove and now passing in the new groove in the avenue. As a result of meditation new channels are formed in the brain, new thought-currents are generated, new brain-cells are formed. There is a transformed psychology altogether. You have got a new brain, a new heart, new feelings, new sentiments, new sensations.

Bhuta Ganas

Sometimes, these elements appear during meditation. They are strange figures some with long teeth, some with big faces, some with big bellies, some with faces on the belly, some with faces on the head. They are inhabitants of the Bhuta Loka. They are Bhutas. They are supposed to be the attendants of Lord Siva. They have terrifying forms. They do not cause any harm at all. They simply appear on the stage. They come to test your strength and courage. They can do nothing. They cannot stand before a pure ethical aspirant. Repetition of few Omkaras will throw them at a distance. You must be fearless. A coward is absolutely unfit for the spiritual path. Develop courage by constantly feeling you are the Atman.

Rising from the Seat

During meditation you may experience that you are rising from your seat. Some experience that they fly in the air.

Divine Light

Divine Light comes not through open doors but only through narrow slits. The aspirant sees the ray

as a sunbeam passing through a chink into a dark room. It is like a "flash of lightning." This sudden illumination chokes all sounds of words. The aspirant is spellbound in ecstasy and awe. He trembles with love and awe just as Arjuna did when he had the Viswa Rupa Darshan of Lord Krishna. So bright and glorious is the Light environing the Divine that the initiate is dazzled and bewildered.

This is a kind of vision one occasionally gets during meditation. You may behold a dazzling light with abrupt motion. You may behold a head of marvellous form of the colour of a flame red as fire, and very awful to look at. It has three wings of a marvellous length and breadth white as a dazzling cloud. At times they would beat terribly and again would be still. The head never utters a word but remains altogether still. Now and again there is beating with its extended wings.

Sometimes bad spirits will trouble you. They may have ugly fierce faces with long teeth. Drive them with your strong will. Give the word of command "Get Out." They will go away. These are vampires. They are elementals. They will not do any harm to the Sadhakas. Your courage will be tested. You will come across very good spirits also. They will help you a lot in your onward march. These are all Vighnas or obstacles on the way.

Aspirants are eager to get spiritual experiences soon. As soon as they get them they are afraid. They are awfully alarmed when they go above the body.

consciousness. They entertain a passing wonder whether they will come back again or not. Why should they be afraid at all? It does not matter much whether they return to body-consciousness or not. All our attempts are mainly directed towards getting over this body and being one with the higher spiritual consciousness. Courage is needed. All sorts of forces have to be encountered on the way.

25. SOME DOUBTS CLARIFIED

Question

During meditation, you appeared before me. Your eyes were big, bright and penetrating. An electrifying sensation penetrated my whole being; then a light appeared—it became a point and vanished. The last thing I remember was a click within the body; lost complete awareness. I was swallowed up in an ocean of nothingness. I do not recollect anything during the period.

(1) Is this Samadhi?

(2) There is a circle of light where the Chakras should be.

(3) Chakras change, slightly different from book illustrations.

(4) Occasionally it takes five minutes to come back to normal consciousness.

(5) Sensitive nature to noise during the first 15 minutes of meditation.

(6) A loud noise hurts occasionally returning to consciousness with a jerk.

Answer

When the Nadis are purified through constant remembrance of the Name of the Lord (Japa) and when Chitta Suddhi (purification of the heart) sets in through selfless service to mankind, the student gets various kinds of Samadhi. That depends on the intensity of concentration during meditation. The

experiences differ in all students. Some may get visions and hear voices. Appearance of lights is a sort of encouragement from astral entities. This is a sign of good spiritual progress.

(1) Yes, it is a kind of Samadhi. The students may not recollect any of the experiences, but can feel the tremendous inner spiritual strength, power, an indescribable happiness and peace.

(2) The light can be either circular or any other shape of Chakra.

(3) Chakras need not be exactly like the book illustrations.

(4) After deep meditations, it may take five minutes to come to normal consciousness. In some cases it may be more than half an hour. In many cases constant remembrance of the State will be there during the day also.

(5) Sensitive nature to sound is due to deep concentration.

(6) Loud noise is only a sort of feeling. The jerk is a sort of feeling only. No harm can come. These are common in all students who progress satisfactorily. They denote progress. Steadiness in practice is needed to attain higher stages in Samadhi. The advanced students develop a new angle of vision—to see the Lord in all beings, to grasp the essence behind all names and forms. Those who make such tremendous progress must take nutritious food, plenty of fruit juice and energy-giving food, frequent relaxation, ample rest. Glory to such dynamic Yogins.

26. GUIDANCE ON THE PATH

1. Bring your mind under perfect control. Make it a perfect instrument for the reception and expression of the highest spiritual experience.

2. In this world of sense-desire, Maya is the Lord. She holds the greatest power in this world. But more powerful are the grace of the Lord, power of meditation, devotion, discrimination and dispassion.

3. When you are assailed by temptations during meditation, your guiding Deity will form a protective circle round you. Fear not. Be bold. March on courageously.

4. You will have to cross a vast void and a region of darkness during meditation. Fear not. You will get radiant light through the Grace of Lord. Be patient. Push on.

5. The elemental forces will try to harm you in meditation, through order of Maya. This is a test. God will give you strength to overcome all obstacles. Stand firm. Be adamant. Victory is always yours. A bed of nails will become a bed of roses for you. There will be a shower of flowers on your head. The hostile elements will be transformed into flowers.

6. You will be attacked from within through the projection of dark thoughts from your subconscious mind.

7. Dark thoughts will take various dark, terrible, hideous forms. They will frighten you. Lower astral entities with dark faces and long teeth will terrify you. They will perish through the Grace of God and power of your meditation.

8. You will be tested whether you are free from fear, ambition and passion.

9. You will get invitation from the Devatas. Thank them, do not yield.

10. Beautiful, celestial damsels will appear before you. They will sing, dance, and smile and try to seduce you. Beware.

11. Be dispassionate. Detect their impurities, hollowness and impermanence. Use the sword of discrimination and axe of dispassion.

12. Come out victorious, O Ram ! Wear the laurels of peace and enter the self-effulgent, Infinite Realm of Immortal Bliss which is beyond time and space.

The Sadhaka gets some experience during the course of his Sadhana, sees wonderful visions of Rishis, Mahatmas, astral entities of various descriptions, etc. He hears various melodious Anahata sounds (Nada). He smells Divya Gandha. He gets the powers of thought-reading, foretelling, etc. The Sadhak now foolishly imagines that he has reached the highest goal and stops his further Sadhana. This is a serious mistake. He gets false Tushti or contentment. These are all auspicious signs that manifest on account of a little purity and concentration. These are all encouragements which God gives as a sort of incentive for further progress and intense Sadhana. The aspirant gets more strength of conviction by having these experiences.

Those who have not removed the impurities of the mind through selfless services, who have not practised the Yama Niyama and who have not deve-

loped the various ethical virtues, who have taken to meditation without the above preliminary qualifications are not able to hold the divine light when it descends. The mind is not strong enough to receive the powerful spiritual light. They get frightened and stop their Sadhana. This is a serious mistake. They should purify their heart and equip themselves with divine virtues and restart their Sadhana with redoubled force, energy and earnestness.

If they are irregular in their practice, if their Vairagya wanes, if they mix freely with worldly people, they get a definite setback, the grace vanishes, the experiences disappear. They are not able to rise up again to their original heights of spiritual glory.

Therefore, regularity in Sadhana and Para Vairagya should be always maintained.

The Sadhakas neglect their body on account of false Vairagya. They do not take proper food. They become weak. They are not able to continue their Sadhana vigorously. This is also one of the causes for their setback.

On account of their overenthusiasm, juvenile zeal, they overdo themselves in their Sadhana. They overexert. They go beyond their capacity. When this is coupled with neglect of proper and regular food, they get various diseases and give up their Sadhana.

Always a little, congenial work should be combined with meditation in the beginning, till one is well-established in deep meditation. During periods

of relaxation a little study and a little work are helpful.

A neophyte should always practise meditation under the guidance of his Guru or a senior Sadhaka. This is vitally important.

Then there is the experience of cosmic consciousness. Glimpse of Brahman will not liberate you. They are Alpam (small experience.) Only experience of Bhuma will give you salvation.

The highest experience is that in which you become identical with Brahman or the Absolute and behold Brahman everywhere.

Of course much depends upon the practice. You know that practice makes man perfect. Feel the thrill of extreme joy that dawns when you are nearing the goal. You will experience a wonderful calm now. Drink the nectar in the deep silence. In the profound silence the mysterious Atma will be revealed unto you like an Amalaka fruit in the palm of your hand. Avidya and Maya and their effects—Moha fear, etc., will take to their heels. There will be light, knowledge, purity and bliss only everywhere.

Some experience glimpses of the transcendent wonders of the Atma. Some are on the borderland of the vast dominion of Atma. Some like Dattatreya, Jada Bharata, Vama Deva and Sada Siva Brahmendra had plunged deep in the ocean of Bliss. The more the thinning of the Vasanas, egoism and Moha, and Adhyasa, the greater the bliss of the Self. The more the Sadhana, the more the experience of joy of the Soul.

CHAPTER IV
SAMADHI OR THE STATE OF
—SUPER-CONSCIOUSNESS

CHAPTER IV
SAMADHI OR THE STATE OF
SUPER-CONSCIOUSNESS

27. WHAT IS SAMADHI ?

Samadhi is inner Divine Experience which is beyond the reach of speech and mind. There is no language or means to give expression to it. The state of Samadhi is all bliss, joy and peace. All mental activities cease now. There is no difference between subject and object.

This state is beyond all relativity. It is not a state of inertia. It is a condition of perfect awareness. It is not merely an emotional enthusiasm or an exhilarating feeling. It is direct, unique-intuitive experience of Truth or Absolute Consciousness. It is not an experience that can be attained through a little practice. To attain Samadhi one should observe strict Brahmacharya, dietetic restrictions and must have purity of heart.

None can enter into Samadhi until he is himself a greatly purified soul. The mind should be perfectly purified. Then only the mechanism or vessel will be fit enough to receive the descent of Divine Light. It should be sufficiently strong to bear the pressure of sudden expansion of consciousness or cosmic vision which is above mind and which covers the whole existence in one sweep of this new exalted, magnanimous experience.

It is only through Samadhi that one can know the Unknown, see the Unseen, can get access into the Inaccessible. The sumtotal of all knowledge of the

three worlds, of all secular sciences is nothing, nothing but mere husk when compared to the Infinite Knowledge of a sage who has attained the highest State of Samadhi.

Samadhi is not a stone-like inert state as many people imagine.

When the mind is completely absorbed in meditation, it is termed Samadhi.

In Samadhi the unity of Jeevatma and the Paramatma is realised.

In Samadhi you transcend the limitations of the empirical existence and attain a rich inner life.

In Samadhi the mind loses its own consciousness and becomes identified with the object of meditation.

Regular reading of religious books by itself is a kind of Savikalpa Samadhi.

The disciple should not sit idle and expect a miracle from the Guru to push him directly into Samadhi.

There is neither meditation nor Samadhi when one realises the Supreme Self.

In Samadhi of positive meditation, the Jnani sees within himself the world as a movement of ideas.

That Yogi who has experienced the pure Nirvikalpa Samadhi crosses over birth and death.

The state of cosmic consciousness is beyond description. It induces awe, supreme joy, and

unalloyed felicity. The state of cosmic consciousness is below the absolute consciousness wherein the seer, sight, the things seen, or the knower, knowable, and knowledge ; or the subject and the object become one. In cosmic consciousness there is yet the seer and the seen.

Cosmic consciousness is perfect awareness of the oneness of life. The Yogi feels that the universe is filled with one life, that is alive, vibrating and intelligent and that there is no such thing as blind force or dead matter. He gets the eye celestial and experiences bliss beyond understanding and description. He actually feels that all is himself only that snakes, scorpions, tigers are as much part of himself as his own eyes, nose, hands and feet.

He is one with the ether, flower, sun, ocean. and sky. He feels the elixir of life, the nectar of immortality flowing in his veins. He feels that the entire universe is bathed in a sea of satisfying love.

28. JADA SAMADHI AND CHAITANYA SAMADHI

Samadhi is of two kinds, viz., Jada Samadhi and Chaitanya Samadhi. There is a popular belief that Samadhi means sitting with a Kowpeen in a state of absolute unconsciousness in the Padmasana or lotus pose with perfect suspension of breath. Ordinary rung of mankind think that the man who is established in Samadhi should not have consciousness of his surroundings and should be absolutely insensible even if a knife is thrust into his body. Such Samadhis do certainly exist. They are all Jada Samadhis induced by Hatha Yogic Kriyas such as Kechari Mudra, Kumbhak Pranayama or retention of breath, etc. The Prana is taken up and fixed in some Chakra. The man is practically dead for the time being. This is something like long deep sleep. These Samadhis are of no value. The Samskaras and Vasanas are not burnt up in toto. There is no perfect awareness during this Samadhi. The man returns from his Samadhi as the same old man with the same bundle of old Samskaras and Vasanas. He has no super-intuitional knowledge. This is a kind of acrobatic feat or internal gymnastics. Such Samadhis cannot give Mukti or liberation. Worldly people are deceived by such feats.

The True Samadhi is something entirely different. It gives supersensual knowledge. All doubts, delusion, the three knots (Avidya, Kama, Karma)

are destroyed by the fire of wisdom. All Vasanas and Samskaras are fried in toto. It gives absolute fearlessness and an unruffled state of mind. This state is described in detail in Bhagavad Gita Ch. II.

The state of Samadhi is maintained even during work. The mind and body are used as perfect instruments in the service of Atman, that is seated in the hearts of all. Sri Sankara, Lord Krishna, Lord Rama did not move an inch from their being established in Brahman (Brahma Sthiti) even during action. Raja Janaka enjoyed true Samadhi even while ruling his kingdom. He never lost sight of Brahman even for a moment. He was put to test and he said "Even if the whole Mithila is burnt, nothing is lost for me. I have the inexhaustible imperishable wealth of Atman." He who is established in Samadhi keeps his mind and body in perfect balance and utilises them in the service of humanity, with Atma Bhav. He is ever fixed in Brahman. He is always in Samadhi. There is no tossing (Vikshepa) for him under any condition, He stands adamant on account of his knowledge of the Self. Real Samadhi should be as much kept up in action as in meditation. This is the real test of one's inner strength and realisation. This is real Chaitanya Samadhi. A Samadhi that one enters into the mountain-caves and forests with closed eyes, but that is broken or shattered during work is no Samadhi at all.

29. LIGHT ON THE PATH OF SAMADHI

Mind and breath are like milk and water. Raja Yoga is control of mind. He who wants to become a perfect Yogi and to experience the wonderful Samadhi must control mind and breath. He must continuously practise Yoga and observe the rules. He must thoroughly overcome the five Tattwas.

Restraint of the mind (Nirodha) leads to Jnana. Nirodha is the culmination of Sankhya and Yoga. It is Nirodha which underlies all the Sadhanas or spiritual exercises. Restraint of the mind is the essence of all worship. This is Jnana and Dhyana. The highest end is attained by restraint of the mind. The mind should be completely restrained from the objects. The mind should be restrained till it attains dissolution in the heart.

Atman or Brahman is your immortal Self. It is the only blazing reality. If you know this Atman only you can attain perfection. Perfection can be yours in this very life. Atman is to be recognised, to be known as your innermost being through Samadhi. If you know this Atman, which is the Ultimate Reality, which is perfection, then only your life becomes useful and real existence. The knower of the Atman, the inner perfection, crosses all sorrows and becomes free. If you do not know this Atman then there is great loss for you.

Samadhi is not a mere emotional enthusiasm or an exhilaration of feeling. It is the direct unique intuitive experience of Truth or Absolute consciousness or the Ultimate Reality. It is beyond all feeling, throbbing and thrill. There is perfect awareness in Samadhi which is beyond expression and feeling. The aspirant rests in his centre now—the goal of his search—and realises the absolute freedom, independence and perfection.

Just as a man who anxiously seeks the means of escape from the midst of a burning house, so also the aspirant should have a burning desire to free himself from the fire of Samsara. Then only he will be able to enter into deep meditation and Samadhi.

The mind becomes the very Brahman, when it is purified and brought into Samadhi state. In Samadhi there is no perception of duality, which is the cause for fear. Avidya is absent in Samadhi.

Samadhi installs you in the Atman. Through Samadhi the finite Self is absorbed in the Infinite or Absolute consciousness. In Samadhi there is no mental tension. There is perfect stillness or perfect poise. There is total mental inhibition. Samadhi follows meditation. Deep meditation is Samadhi. The mind that is endowed with a finished discipline in intensive contemplation can enter into Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

In Samadhi the mind withdraws from its natural or habitual occupation and gets itself fixed upon the Atman which is not touched by the mind. The mind

does not at all function in Samadhi. It gets absorbed in Brahman. If you can consciously induce a state like deep sleep, it is not longer deep sleep, but it is Samadhi. It is sleepless sleep wherein the senses and the mind entirely cease their functioning and the veil of ignorance is destroyed by the fire of knowledge. The aspirant enjoys perfect joy of freedom and infinite, supracosmic, vast experiences and the supreme silence of the Imperishable.

In Samadhi the purified mind withdraws itself from the external objects, looks within and concentrates on the Innermost Self or the Atman. It resolves itself in the Atman, its source, and becomes Atman itself. It takes the form of Atman, just as camphor becomes the fire itself. Knowledge of Brahman or Atman is real experience and not mere knowing. To know Brahman is to become Brahman. "Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati"—this is the emphatic declaration of the Upanishads.

In Samadhi there is revelation or insight or intuition. The Jnana Chakshu or Divya Chakshu is opened. The third eye of wisdom opens by itself when the Brahmakara Vritti is raised. The sage born of Samadhi-experience gets established in his own Self. He is endowed with cosmic vision and transcendental divine knowledge.

As long as you are in Samadhi Nishtha there is only Brahman or the Absolute. Nirantara Samadhi does not mean sitting blind-folded but the renunciation of attachment to the body and regarding

individual soul and supreme Soul as one and knowing that the practitioner himself is Paramatma and acting upon this knowledge. Samadhi means the annihilation or absorption of the mind. Wherever he goes he beholds the one Self everywhere. Neither self-abnegation nor self-knowledge is enough but the co-existence of both self-abnegation and self-knowledge constitutes Nirantara Samadhi. Self-knowledge is Brahma Nishtha. He who has acquired this has no body.

The state in which the mind remains free from sensations is Mukti. Vishaya means the function of the senses. Therefore the state of the mind remaining unconnected with the senses or with the mind's own functions or actions, viz., hopes, fears, etc., is Mukti. Mind without mingling with Brahman cannot be disconnected with sensations. Mind becomes one with the Brahman. This is Mukti. This is the state of Nirvishaya.

Individual soul becomes Supreme Soul. This is Mukti. Just as salt mingled with water becomes water so mind mingled with Brahman ultimately becomes Brahman itself. When the mind becomes Brahman this world which is the creation of the mind also melts away in Brahman and becomes Brahman itself. Therefore, All this Brahman will come home only to him who has practised this Nishtha.

According to Vedanta annihilation of Avidya or ignorance leads to Samadhi. According to Patanjali

Maharshi the aspirant attains Samadhi by removing the hold of Prakriti by practice and discipline.

The Vedanti enjoys the Eternal Bliss and natural easiness of Sahaja Samadhi. He remains as a Sakshi or silent witness.⁵ He does not make any serious attempt to control the psychic stream or thought current. He raises the Brahmakara Vritti by meditation on the significance of "Tat Twam Asi" Mahavakya. The Chitta is modified in the form of Brahmakara Vritti. All other modifications are withdrawn. This Vritti annihilates the ignorance and dies by itself and Brahman shines out as the aspirant realises his identity. When the Vritti is continuous, the highest form of Samadhi i.e. Nirvikalpa Samadhi is attained. When it is intermittent, the sage attains Savikalpa Samadhi.

The Samadhi in the Jnani is effortless and spontaneous. "*Yatra yatra mano yati tara tara Samadhayah.*"—wherever the mind goes there it experiences Samadhi. He rests in Samadhi always. There is no "In Samadhi" and "Out of Samadhi" for a sage. He experiences Samadhi always without any effort. Hence it is called Sahajavastha or Sahaja Samadhi. He enjoys freedom, bliss and peace in all moments of his life. He drinks the nectar of immortality in this very life.

Yogic Samadhi is analytical and discriminative. In this Samadhi greater stress is laid upon the discrimination between the Prakriti and the Purusha. In Inana Samadhi no discrimination is needed. Brahmakara Vritti raised by an attempt to become

identical with the Supreme Self or Brahma Chintan destroy Avidya and dies by itself.

Samadhi

Samadhi is union with the Lord. It is super-conscious experience. It is Adhyatmic Anubhava.

A Hatha Yogi through the practice of Kechari Mudra can shut himself up in a box which is then buried underneath the ground for months. There is no higher super-sensual knowledge in this kind of Samadhi. In Jada Samadhi the Sadhak is unconscious. It is more or less like deep sleep. The aspirant has no super-sensuous knowledge. Doubtless this is a difficult Yogic Kriya, but it does not give Atma Jnana. It cannot destroy the Samskaras and Vasanas. Hatha Yogins of this type eventually become commercial people and do not thrive at all in the spiritual path. They run after name, fame and money and thus face a hopeless downfall in spirituality. In Chaitanya Samadhi, there is perfect awareness. The Yogi comes down with new super-sensuous wisdom.

Samadhi, Mukti, Tureeya are synonymous terms. Samadhi means super-consciousness. The meditator in Samadhi is conscious of his own Self. Mukti is freedom from birth and death. Mukti is attainment of Paramananda state or the state of supreme bliss. Mukti is freedom from all sorts of pains. Tureeya is the fourth state. It transcends the three states, viz, Jagrat (waking state), Swapna (dream state) and Sushupti (deep sleep state). To distinguish this state from the other three states, it is called the fourth state.

Moksha is loss of one's personality in the Divine. It is deliverance from delusion of personality. There is no annihilation by the melting of this little false personality. Just as the river becomes the ocean itself, the individual soul becomes the mighty supreme Soul with higher consciousness and transcendental bliss and knowledge.

The state of Samadhi is beyond the reach of mind and speech. Even in worldly experience, you cannot express taste of an apple to one who has not tasted it, or the nature of the colour to a blind man. The state of Samadhi is all bliss, joy and peace. This much only can be said. One has to feel this himself.

In Samadhi or the super-conscious state the mediator loses his individuality and becomes identical with the Supreme Self. He becomes an embodiment of bliss, peace and knowledge. So much only can be said. You can experience this yourself through constant meditation.

Nirvikalpa Samadhi is the state of super-consciousness (God-head). There is no Vikalpa (imagination) of any sort in this condition. This is the goal of life. All the mental activities cease now. The function of the intellect and the ten Indriyas cease entirely. The aspirant rests now in Atman. There is no distinction between subject and object. The world and the pairs of opposites vanish absolutely. This is a state beyond all relativity. It is not a state of inertia. It is a condition of perfect

awareness. The aspirant gets knowledge of the Self, supreme peace and infinite, indescribable bliss and joy. This state is indescribable. It has to be felt and experienced by the aspirant. The triad, viz., knower, knowledge and knowable disappears. Man is Brahman now. There is no longer Jivahood. This is also called Yogaroodha state.

Try to enjoy that sleepless sleep wherein all the senses and mind remain in a state of quietude and the intellect ceases functioning. This sleepless sleep is Maha Nidra or superconscious state. It is perfect awareness wherein the individual soul has merged itself into the Supreme Soul. There is no waking from this sleep. The show of names and forms eventually vanishes.

In Samadhi or super-conscious state, the Yogic practitioner gets himself merged in the Lord. The senses, the mind and intellect cease functioning. Just as the river joins the ocean the individual soul mixes with the supreme Soul. All limitations and differences disappear. The Yogi attains highest knowledge and eternal bliss. This state is beyond description. You will have to realise this yourself.

II

Still the waves of the mind and hold it steady in Nirvikalpa Samadhi. This needs constant and protracted practice of meditation. There may be breaks in the meditation in the beginning. But practice can make you perfect. Later on you can remain absorbed in meditation. You can merge

yourself in Samadhi with a mind steady like a flame protected from wind. Before getting sanguine success in meditation, get victory over the Asans or pose first. Sit upon your seat with the steadiness of a rock for 2 or 3 hours. If the body is steady, the mind also will be steady.

Do not mistake a little concentration or one-pointedness of mind for Samadhi. Simply because you have risen a little above body-consciousness on account of little concentration, do not think that you have attained Samadhi.

Separate the mind from the body and unite it with the Supreme Self. This is known as Samadhi or super-conscious state. This will give liberation or freedom from births and deaths. Samadhi is obtained by practice for a long time with zeal and enthusiasm.

Samadhi is the highest goal which one can attain through meditation. It is not a thing that can be attained through a little practice. To attain Samadhi one should observe strict Brahmacharya, dietetic restrictions and must have purity of heart. If these are not attained there is no possibility of attaining that state. These preliminary qualifications should be grasped well and then only one must try to enter the portals of Samadhi. None can enter of Samadhi unless he is himself a great devotee of the Lord. Otherwise, the so-called Samadhi becomes Jada to him.

If the Vasanas and attachment to the objects of

the world vanish entirely and if you are in that immovable state, you have become a Jeevanmukta. You will abide in your own Self. You will rest in that non-dual supreme seat. The Jnana vision will arise in you. The light of wisdom will shine unobscured like the sun in the absence of clouds. You will never be attracted to any worldly objects. You will be absolutely free from delusion and sorrow. You will actually feel that the Self alone pervades and permeates everywhere in the world. You will shine with Brahmic effulgence. You will possess equal vision and a balanced mind. You will be free from longing for sensual objects, because the mind will always be made cool with Brahmic Bliss. You will be bathed in the cool ambrosial nectar that dribbles from a contented and quiescent mind.

Shikhidhwaja was absorbed in the Brahmic state for 2 Ghatikas (48 minutes). He was as immovable as a pillar in Nirvikalpa Samadhi. His wife Chudalai, in the form of Kumbha Muni, his Guru made a lion's roar, which could not even wake him up from his Samadhi. Though she tossed him up and down, no impression was made on him in the least, in spite of his body falling down.

When you enter into deep meditation, the pulse beats may come to 30. The onlooker may not be able to perceive the breathing. The breath may not come out of the nostrils. In Jada Samadhi of Hatha Yogins, the breathing and heart will entirely stop. In

the initial stages of Chaitanya Samadhi the lungs and heart will be functioning very very slowly.

Advanced aspirants should stop all sorts of work, and study of religious books, even if they want to enter into Samadhi quickly. They should observe Mowna and remain in a solitary place on the banks of Ganges, Jamuna or Narmada or any river. They should live on $1\frac{1}{2}$ seers milk alone or milk and fruits. They should plunge themselves in Samadhi in right earnest. They should reduce sleep to 2 or 3 hours. They should start the practice in the beginning of winter in November. There is real rest in meditation. This rest is far superior to the rest that is obtained from sleep. Sound sleep even for half or one hour will suffice for the man who regularly meditates.

30. THE STATE OF BLISSFUL DIVINE EXPERIENCE

The meditation is Samadhi when it shines with the object of meditation alone as it were devoid of itself. The thinker and the meditated become one. The mind becomes the Dhyeyarupa. The separate notions 'contemplation' and 'contemplated' and 'contemplator' vanish. In the state of Samadhi the aspirant is not conscious of any external or internal objects. Just as the arrow-maker having his mind engrossed in the arrow, knows not the king passing by his side so also the Yogi knows not anything when he is deep in his meditation.

Samadhi or blissful divine experience arises when the ego and the mind are dissolved. It is a state to be attained by one's own effort. It is limitless, divisionless and infinite. When this experience is realised the mind, desires, actions and feelings of joy and sorrow vanish into a void.

Samadhi is of various kinds. But of all of them there are only very few important ones.

The Samadhi experienced by a Bhakta is Bhava Samadhi. The devotee attains the state through Bhava and Maha Bhava. A Bhakta who meditates on the form of Lord Sri Krishna will see Krishna and Krishna only everywhere when he is established in Samadhi. He will see himself as Sri Krishna, Gopis of Brindavan;

Gouranga and Ekanath had this experience. Those who meditate on the All-pervading Krishna will have another kind of experience, the consciousness of whole Virat.

Again there are two other varieties of Samadhi, viz., Savikalpa and Nirvikalpa Samadhi. In the first variety there is Triputi or the Triad, viz., knower, knowledge and the knowable or the seer, sight and the seen. The Samskaras are not destroyed. In the latter the Samskaras are totally fried or destroyed. There is no Triputi in Nirvikalpa.

Samprajnata is another name for Savikalpa Samadhi. Asamprajnata is another name for Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

In Nirvikalpa Samadhi there is no ego-consciousness. Ego and mind melt in fuse in Brahman. The pure mind assumes the form of Brahman. This is known as Nirbeeja Samadhi. There is no prop for the mind in this Samadhi. The Samskaras are fried in toto. Savikalpa Samadhi deepens into Nirvikalpa Samadhi. There is no idea of any kind in Nirvikalpa Samadhi. It is thoughtless Absolute Consciousness.

Nirvikalpa means that in which there is no Vikalpa. That which is not associated with any [idea is Nirvikalpa. No imagination, no functioning of mind or intellect. All Vrittis totally cease. There is only pure Consciousness or Awareness. All the Samskaras and Vasanas are fried in toto, All names and forms are burnt up. Asti-Bhati-Priya only remains.

Asti-Bhati-Priya is Sat-Chit-Ananda. That which ever exists is Asti; that which shines is Bhati. This is Absolute Consciousness. And that which gives Happiness is Priya; this is unalloyed Bliss, Ananda. In Nirvikalpa Samadhi the mind is freed from distraction, attachments. It rests unmoved like the flame of a lamp sheltered from the wind.

In Samadhi or Super-Consciousness the student gets himself merged in the Lord. The senses, the mind and the intellect cease functioning. Just as the river joins the ocean the individual soul mixes with the Supreme Soul. The Samadhi bestows Supreme Knowledge and one is freed from the wheel of birth and death and gets Kaivalya (Moksha) or Liberation.

The knowledge gained through the senses in the relative world is not the highest knowledge. It cannot give you permanent satisfaction and everlasting felicity and peace. It is limited knowledge. There is always a sense of void in you in spite of your intellectual attainments of all sorts. There is an urge in your mind to attain transcendental knowledge, the knowledge of the Eternal, by which everything is known. *Yasmin vijnate sarvam idam vijnatam bhavati*. This divine knowledge is beyond the reach of the senses and the mind. The senses and the mind cannot penetrate into the heart of the ultimate Truth or the Infinite. They are finite instruments. The intellect and mind have got their own limitations. They can operate only in the earth plane. It is through intuitive insight that you can attain this transcendental know-

ledge of the Absolute in Samadhi. It is only through Samadhi that you can know the Unknown, you can see the Unseen, you can get access into the Inaccessible.

Dharana or concentration, Dhyana or meditation, Samadhi or superconscious state are the inner limbs (Antaranga) of Ashtanga Yoga or Raja Yoga. They constitute the Antaranga Sadhana. They complete the psychic and mental discipline. These three—Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi—constitute Samyama. They are practised at a time. They are stages in the mental effort of concentration. Meditation follows concentration and Samadhi follows meditation.

In Samadhi the mind becomes one with the object of its concentration. The meditator and the meditated, the thinker and the thought, the subject and the object become one. In concentration the mind is simply fixed on the object. In meditation the mind is filled with one idea of the object alone. All other thoughts are shut out.

In Samadhi the mind is stilled, the Chitta is silenced, and the thoughts are controlled, and all surging bubbling emotions are subdued. The Yogi passes into the transcendental calm or the stupendous ocean of silence and attains the transcendental knowledge of Brahman or the Eternal.

Samadhi or ecstasy is blissful union. The mind melts in the Eternal or Atma like salt in water or camphor in flame. It is a state of pure consciousness. The mind has always Vrittis or modifications. If the mind of man is freed from these through concen-

tration and meditation, he becomes Brahman
Manaso vrittishunyasya Brahmakaralaya sthitih.

Samadhi is a means of liberation or freedom from births and deaths. It leads to the direct intuitive perception of the Truth or the Infinite. It puts an end to all troubles of life and the causes of rebirth. It annihilates the impressions or Samskaras which give rise to fresh births. It helps one to tide over even Prarabdha, even though all the fruition of his past Karmas has not ended.

Faith (Sraddha) or confidence in the power of Yoga, power (Veerya) for the concentration of mind, memory (Smriti) for contemplation, Samadhi, the final aspect of Yoga, Prajna, discernment or the direct perception brought about by meditation becomes the means for the attainment of Samadhi.

31. BHAKTI YOGA SAMADHI

In Bhakti Yoga there is absence of the least tinge of pride and self-assertion. The devotee does unreserved total self-surrender to the Lord. He resigns himself completely to the Lord and obtains His Grace. Grace is a mighty spiritual force. It transforms the entire being of a devotee. It infuses in him inspiration and a new divine life. Self-surrender makes the devotee feel the reality of Divine Grace and Lord's readiness to bestow on him help at all times. It is through grace alone that the devotee's whole being is galvanised and rejuvenated. Through Divine Grace there is inflow of Divine energy into the entire being of a devotee and his whole being is properly moulded for Divine realisation and divine instrumentality.

There are nine modes or rungs in (Navavidha) Bhakti. They are Sravan, Kirtan, Smaran, Padasevan, Archan, Vandan, Dasya, Sakhya and Atmanivedan. Sravan is hearing His Leelas. Kirtan is singing His names. Smaran is remembrance. Padasevan is service of His feet. Archan is offering of flowers to the Lord. Vandan is prostration. Dasya is servant Bhav. Sakhya is friendship with the Lord. Atmanivedan is self-surrender or Saranangati.

Admiration, faith, devotion, Ruchi (taste for Name of the Lord, for repetition and singing), Nishtha (devoutness), Rati (intense attachment to the Lord),

Sthayi Bhav (steadiness in Prem) and Maha Bhava (Premamaya or Param Prem) are the eight steps in the ladder of Prem or Bhakti Yoga. Admiration, devotion, worship and absorption are the four stages in Bhakti Yoga. Salokya, Sameepya Saroopya and Sayujya are the four kinds of Mukti of the devotees.

Surrender draws down grace. The individual becomes one with the cosmic will through surrender. Grace makes surrender complete. Without grace perfect union is not possible. Surrender and grace are interrelated. Grace removes all obstacles, snares and pitfalls in the spiritual path.

The Bhakta gets Bhav Samadhi and Mahabhav. He enjoys the warm embrace of the Divine. He attains Divine Aishwarya. All the spiritual wealth of the Lord belongs to him. He is endowed with divine vision or Divya Chakshu. He is endowed with Divya (lustrous) subtle body and Divya (divine) senses. He does not like to have complete absorption or merging in the Lord. He wants to remain himself separate in front of Him and taste the divine honey of Prem. The absorption in the Lord comes to him temporarily in the intensity of his love and experience in the beginning though he does not like it. He attains similarity with God. He is God-like in the beginning. Eventually, he attains Sayujya or Oneness.

A Bhakta who meditates on the form of Lord Krishna will see Krishna and Krishna only everywhere, when he is established in Samadhi. All other

forms will disappear. This is one kind of spiritual experience. He will see himself also as Krishna. Gopis of Brindavan, Gouranga and Ekanath had this experience. Those who meditate on the all-pervading Krishna will have another kind of cosmic experience. Arjuna had this kind of experience. He had consciousness of the whole Virat. He had cosmic consciousness.

32. RAJA YOGA SAMADHI

According to Raja Yoga, Samadhi is of two kinds, viz., Samprajnata and Asamprajnata. In the former, the seeds of Samskaras are not destroyed. In the latter, the Samkaras are fried or annihilated in toto. That is the reason why the former is called Sabeeja Samadhi (with seeds) and the latter as Nirbeeja Samadhi (without seeds or Samskaras). Samprajnata Samadhi leads to Asamprajnata Samadhi.

The Samprajnata Samadhi is also known by the name Savikalpa Samadhi or Sabeeja Samadhi. This Samadhi brings perfect knowledge of the object of meditation. The mind continuously and to the exclusion of all other objects assumes the nature and becomes one with the object of its contemplation. The Yogi attains all the powers of controlling the nature in this Samadhi.

The Samprajnata Samadhi is of four kinds, viz., Savitarka, Savichara, Sananda, Asmita Samadhi. All these Samadhis have something to grasp. There is Alambana or argumentation or questioning. They give intensive joy but they are not the best and finest forms of Samadhi. They cover the gross or the subtle elements of nature and the organs of sense. They give you the direct knowledge of the elements, objects and instruments of knowlege and some freedom.

These stages are in the form of steps of an ascending staircase. To begin with, meditation should be done on a gross form. When you advance in this meditation, you can take to abstract meditation, or meditation on subtle things or ideas. Mind should be gradually disciplined and trained in meditation. It cannot all at once enter into the highest Asamprajnata Samadhi or that which constitutes the highest subtle essence. That is the reason why Patanjali Maharshi has prescribed the practice of various kinds of lower Samadhis. When the mind is extremely attached to gross objects, it is not possible to fix it on subtle objects all at once. There must be gradual ascent in the ladder of Yoga. You should place your foot-step cautiously in each rung of the ladder. You should pass through successive stages before you attain the highest ASAMPRAJNATA or Nirvikalpa Samadhi. But Yoga Bhrashtas who have passed through the lower stages in their previous birth can attain to the highest stage at the very outset through the grace of the Lord. If the Yogic student had reached the higher state, he need not revert to the lower stages.

All the forms of Samprajnata Samadhi are Salamban Yoga (with support) and Sabeeja Yoga (with seed of Samskara). The Yogins enjoy a form of freedom. Dharma Megha in Raja Yoga means "the cloud of virtue." Just as clouds shower rain, so also this Dharma Megha Samadhi showers on the Yogins omniscience and all sorts of Siddhis or powers. The Yogi enjoys a form of freedom. Therefore this Samadhi is

called the Showerer or cloud (Megha) of virtue (Dharma). The Yogi enjoys expanded vision of God.

Ritambhara, Prajnaloka, Prasannavahita are the three stages or Bhumikas of Samprajnata Samadhi. In Ritambhara the content of the mental Vritti is Sat-chidananda. There is still a separate knower. You get Yathartha Jnana or real wisdom. In the second, every kind of Avarana (veiling) is removed. The third state is the state of peace in which the mind is destitute of all mental modifications. The knowledge that you get from testimony and inference is above objects of the world; but the knowledge that you obtain from Samadhi is Divine Knowledge. It is supersensual, intuitive knowledge where reason, inference and testimony cannot go.

Savitarka and Nirvitarka Samadhis

Savitarka Samadhi is Samadhi with reasoning. It is a superficial attempt of the mind to grasp any object. In this Samadhi, Sabda (sound), Artha (meaning), Jnana (knowledge) are mixed up.

The aspirant can meditate on the body of Virat or Lord Vishnu with four hands or Lord Krishna with flute in hand or any ordinary object. He will obtain the direct perception of all the peculiar features, the excellences (Gunas) and defects (Doshas) of the object of meditation. He will have complete knowledge of the object. He will be endowed with all the features of the object unheard of and unthought of. He will obtain these through Savitarka

Samadhi. The Yogic student meditates on the object again and again by isolating it from other objects.

You can meditate on the gross elements also. You will gain power over them through intense meditation. The elements will reveal to you their truths.

Just as the new archer first aims at big object only and then at smaller ones gradually, so also the beginner in Yoga concentrates on the gross objects such as the five Maha Bhutas, Lord Hari with four hands, and then on subtle ones. In this manner the grasp of the objects by the mind becomes subtle. A Yogi directly perceives the real body of the Lord Vishnu as He lives in Vaikuntha by the force of his meditation although he remains at a great distance from the Lord.

In Savitarka Samadhi concentration is practised on gross objects and their nature in relation to time and space. This is a gross form of Samadhi. When the Yogi meditates on the elements as they are by taking them out of time and space, then it is called Nirvitarka Samadhi without questioning or reasoning or argumentation. This is subtle form of Samadhi.

In Savitarka there is Vikalpa or fanciful notion of word (Sabda), object (Artha), and idea (Jneya). There is no such notion in Nirvitarka Samadhi. There are three factors in the comprehension of a word e.g. cow—(1) cow, the word, (2) cow, the object, (3) cow, the idea in the mind. When the meditator imagines these three to be one and the same, it is an instance

of Vikalpa or fanciful notion of the word, object and idea.

Savichara and Nirvichara Samadhi

If you meditate on the subtle Tanmatras and their nature in relation to time and space, it is Savichara Samadhi with deliberation or discrimination. This is Sukshma or subtle. This is subtler than Savitarka and Nirvitarka Samadhis. Tanmatras are the root-elements or Sukshma Bhutas. The five gross elements are derived from the Tanmatras through the process of quintuplication or mixing. Meditation goes a step higher in this Samadhi than in the previous one. The Yogi will get knowledge of the Tanmatras. He will obtain control over the Tanmatras. He will get the direct perception of the various subtle forms of the object culminating in primordial matter or Mula Prakriti.

The word 'subtle' indicates cause in general. It stands for all such causal principles as the Tanmatras or the primary elements, egoism, or Ahankara, Mahat Tattwa or intellect and Prakriti.

There is a mysterious power, Achintya Sakti in meditation. Although ordinary meditation is possible only in ways already heard and thought of, yet even such things as have not been heard or thought of may be directly cognised by the force of meditation.

There is no difference between the cause and its products. All gross objects are the products of

the twenty-six principles. They are really of the same nature as that of twenty-six principles.

If you meditate on the subtle Tanmatras by taking them out of time and space, by thinking as they are, it will constitute Nirvichara Samadhi without deliberation or discrimination. As there is pure Sattwa only in the mind owing to the eradication of Rajas and Tamas, the Yogi enjoys internal peace or contentment (Adhyatmic Prasad) and subjective luminosity. The mind is very steady.

Sananda Samadhi or the Blissful Samadhi

Now we proceed to describe the joyful Samadhi. This is joyous Samadhi and it gives intense joy. In this Samadhi the gross and the five elements are given up. The Yogi meditates on the Sattvic mind itself. He thinks of the mind which is devoid of Rajas and Tamas. There arises in the Yogi a peculiar perception in the form of intense joy through this type of Samadhi.

Asmita Samadhi

In this Samadhi the mind is the object of meditation. It bestows the knowledge of the subject of all experiences. The Self knows the Self. The Sattvic state of the ego only remains. The Yogi can think himself now as without his gross body. He feels that he has a fine body. This Samadhi takes the Yogi to the root of experiences and shows the way to freedom.

The Yogi feels, "I am (Asmi) other than the body" He experiences that the gross subtle and joyous

Samadhis are not the highest Samadhis. He finds defects in them also and gets disgusted with them. He proceeds further and practises Asmita Samadhi. He experiences Self-consciousness (Asmita). He experiences a feeling of 'enough' and develops dispassion in its highest form (Para Vairagya). This finally leads to the development of Asamprajnata Samadhi.

Asamprajnata Samadhi or Nirbeeja or Nirvikalpa Samadhi

This is the highest form of Samadhi. This comes after Viveka-khyati or the final discrimination between Prakriti and Purusha. All the seeds or impressions are burnt by the fire of knowledge. This Samadhi brings Kaivalya or Absolute Independence. This is the culmination or climax of Yoga, or final Prasankhyana which bestows the supreme, undying peace or knowledge. The Yogi enjoys the transcendental glories of the Self and has perfect freedom from the mental life. The sense of time is replaced by a sense of Eternity.

In this Samadhi, there is neither Triputi nor Alam-bana. The Samskaras are fried in toto. This Samadhi alone can destroy birth and death and bring in highest knowledge and bliss.

When you get full success or perfection (Siddhi) in Raja Yoga by entering into Asamprajnata Samadhi (Nirvikalpa State) all the Samskaras and Vasanas which bring on rebirths are totally fried up. All Vrittis or mental modifications that arise from the mind-lake come under restraint. The five afflictions

viz., Avidya (ignorance), Asmita (egoism), Ragadwesha (love and hatred) and Abhinivesha (clinging to life) are destroyed and the bonds of Karma are annihilated. This Samadhi brings on highest good (Nisreyas) and exaltation (Abhyudaya). It gives Moksha (deliverance from the wheel of births and deaths). With the advent of the knowledge of the Self, ignorance vanishes. With the disappearance of the root-cause, viz., ignorance, egoism, etc., also disappear.

In the Asamprajnata Samadhi, all the modifications of the mind are completely restrained. All the residual Samskaras are totally fried up. This is the highest Samadhi of Raja Yoga. This is also known as Nirbeeja Samadhi (without seeds) and Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

In this Samadhi the Yogi sees without eyes, tastes without tongue, hears without ears, smells without nose and touches without skin. His Sankalpas can work miracles. He simply wills and everything comes into Being. This state is described in Taittareeya Aranyaka I-ii-5

"The blind man pierced the pearl, the fingerless put a thread into it; the neckless wore it and the touchless praised it".

Eventually, the Purusha realises His own native state of Divine glory, Isolation or absolute Independence (Kaivalya). He has completely disconnected himself from the Prakriti and its effects. He feels his absolute freedom and attains Kaivalya, the highest goal of Raja Yoga. All Klesha Karmas .

are destroyed now. The Gunas having fulfilled their objects of Bhoga and Apavarga now entirely cease to act. He has simultaneous knowledge now. The past and the future are blended into the present. Everything is "Now". Everything is "Here". He has transcended time and space. The sumtotal of all knowledge of the three worlds, of all secular sciences is nothing, nothing but mere husk when compared to the Infinite knowledge of a Yogi who has attained Kaivalya. Glory, Glory to such exalted Yogins!

33. HOW THE YOGI COMES DOWN FROM SAMADHI

Examples of Sikhidhwaja and Prahlada

Sikhidhwaja entered into Nirvikalpa Samadhi. He was immovable as a pillar in Nirvikalpa Samadhi. His wife (Chudalai) made a lion's roar. This did not wake him up from the Samadhi. Then she tossed him up and down. The body fell down, but he was not brought down to his consciousness. Then she concentrated her mind and found one thing in her Yogic vision that there was some residue of Sattva in his heart which indicated to her that there was intelligence yet animating the body.

Like flowers and fruits latent in a seed, a residue of Sattwa, the cause of intelligence rests always in the heart of one who is in Samadhi. Then she entered into the subtle body of the king and caused that part of it which had the residue of pure Sattwa in it to vibrate. Then she returned to her own body and chanted the Sama Veda songs. Then Sikhidhwaja came back to his external consciousness. It is only through the residue of Sattwa that Jeevanmuktas are awakened to an external perception of objects.

Prahlada seated himself in Nirvikalpa Samadhi for five thousand years. Lord Hari caused his Panchajanya to be sounded in order to intimate Prahlada of his arrival. Prahlada slowly recovered consciousness on the physical plane. He opened

his eyes slowly. Prana and Apana began to percolate all throughout the Nadis. In the twinkling of an eye, the mind became gross; and his eyes, mind, Prana and body began to glow with life with their respective functions.

In the case of Jeevanmuktas the pure Vasanas exist like burnt seeds. They will never be reproductive of rebirth. These pure Vasanas are associated with Sattva Guna and Atmic Dhyana. They exist in Jeevanmukta like Vasanas in deep sleep. Even after the lapse of a thousand years, so long as the body is in existence, the pure Vasanas will be latent in the heart of Jeevanmuktas and will melt away gradually. It is only through these pure Vasanas that Jeevanmuktas are awakened to perception of the external world.

O Man! You are surrounded by the wild fire of Samsara and the three fires. You are travelling in the dire forest of Moha. The tiger-mind is threatening to devour you. You are captured by the thieves, the six dacoits—Arishadvarga, viz., lust, anger, greed, etc. You are stung by the snake, Asha or desire. Find out the means of escape at once. Approach a spiritual preceptor. Serve him with faith and devotion. Get from him spiritual instructions. Follow them to the very letter. Free yourself from the thralldom of mind and matter by entering into Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

34, JNANA YOGA SAMADHI

Jnana Yoga Samadhi is of two kinds, viz, Savikalpa and Nirvikalpa. Again Savikalpa Samadhi is of two kinds, viz., Drishyanuvid when it is connected with an object and Shabdanuvid when it is connected with a sound.

Meditate on the consciousness as the witness for the modifications of the mind, such as desires, etc., which are to be regarded as perceivable objects. This is inner Antar Drishyanuvid Savikalpa Samadhi.

When you meditate and actually feel "I am Asanga (unattached) Satchidananda, self-luminous, Adwaita Swaroopa," it is Antar Shabdanuvid Savikalpa Samadhi.

That steady state of the mind like the unflickering flame of a light in a place free from wind wherein one gets indifferent to both objects and sounds owing to his total merging in the realisation of his own real Self (Brahman) is termed Antar Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

Just as you practise meditation inside the heart, when you see the Sat Vastu—Brahman only in the external objects by separating the names and forms, it is termed Bahir Drishyanuvid Savikalpa Samadhi.

That constant reflection that the unlimited Satchidananda Vastu which is always of one nature is Brahman, is the middle kind of Samadhi or Bahir Shabdanuvid Savikalpa Samadhi.

By the practice and experience of the above two kinds of Samadhi, that steady state of the mind produced owing to the realisation of bliss (like the ocean without waves) is called the third kind of Samadhi or Bahir Nirvikalpa Samadhi. One should always spend his time in these six kinds of Samadhi. By these Samadhis the identification with the body vanishes and the highest Self is realised and the mind is always in Samadhi wherever (or whatever place) and to whatever object is directed (or runs on there).

When the Samadhi is associated with the sound "I am Brahman—Aham Brahma Asmi" it is Shabdanuvid. When it is not associated with sound of "Aham Brahma Asmi" it is Shabdanuvid.

In Nirvikalpa Samadhi, the mind is fixed in Adviteeya Brahman without any Triputi i.e., any idea of Knower Knowledge and knowable and is without recognition of subject and object. Savikalpa Samadhi is a means (Sadhana) to the end—Nirvikalpa Samadhi is the fruit or the result.

Though there is a perception of duality in the Savikalpa Samadhi in as much as there is distinct recognition of subject and object, yet the duality only helps to know the Adviteeya Brahman; in the same way as in an earthen object, there is a perception of earth, though there be an appearance of an earthen jar, etc. So, too, is there the perception of the secondless Brahman alone, even though there be an appearance of duality.

Nirvikalpa Samadhi is of two kinds, viz., Advaita Bhavanarupa Samadhi which is Vrittisahita (Brahmakara Vritti is present here) and Advaita Avastharupa Samadhi which is Vrittirahita (Brahmakara Vritti dies here). Advaita-bhavanarupa Samadhi is Sadhana (means) to an end. Advaita-avastharupa Samadhi is the result or fruit.

In Vichara Sagar you will find: in this manner the difference between the two kinds of meditation is established: that is to say, in the meditation with recognition of subject and object, there is perception of duality with that of Brahman, and in the meditation without recognition of subject and object, there is no conscious perception of the three integral constituents, knower, knowledge and object to be known; likewise with the state of profound slumber and this second variety of meditation, there is this difference, that in the former, there is an absence of the modification of the mental function in the shape of Brahman while in the latter, there is no perception of it. Thus, then, there is an entire absence of the internal organ with its function in profound slumber, while in the unconscious meditation there is only a want of the perception, though the internal organ and its function are modified into the shape of the Brahman; now this modification proceeds from the practice of the conscious variety of meditation, hence that is reckoned as one of the eight means whose result is this meditation without recognition of subject and object.

Unconscious meditation is of two kinds. (1) Non-dual mental perception (2) Non-dual form of resting in Brahman.

(1) When the non-dual modification of the internal organ after it has assumed the shape of the Brahman arises with the unknown function, it is called a form of non-dual mental perception of the unconscious meditation. Here much practice is needed so that the functional modification of Brahman also ceases ; and

(2) When the function has been completely done away with it constitutes the non-dual condition of unconscious meditation. Then just as water sprinkled on red hot iron is absorbed into the body of the metal, so by such persevering and firm practice of the non-dual perceptive form of the unconscious meditation, the function merges into the extremely manifested Brahman, and this resting on the non-dual Brahman-form of the unconscious meditation is the chief result of which the first or perceptive is a means only.

Between the non-dual resting and the profound slumber the difference consists in the merging of the mental function in ignorance in the latter and the merging of the same function in the extremely tangible Brahman in the former ; the felicity of the latter is enveloped in Ignorance while the blissfulness of Brahman perceived in the former is entirely devoid of covering.

There is neither darkness nor void in this experience. It is all light. There is neither sound nor touch nor form here. It is a magnanimous experience of unity or oneness. There is neither time nor causation here. You become omniscient and omnipotent. You become a Sarvavid or all-knower. You know everything. You know the whole mystery of creation. You get Immortality, higher knowledge and eternal bliss.

All dualities vanish here. There is neither subject nor object. There is neither Sakar nor Nirakar. There is neither meditation nor Samadhi. There is neither Dwaita nor Adwaita. There is neither Vikshepa nor one-pointedness. There is neither meditator nor meditated. There is neither day nor night.

When you are established in the highest Nirvikalpa Samadhi you have nothing to see, nothing to hear, nothing to smell, nothing to feel. You have no body-consciousness. You have full Brahmic consciousness. There is nothing but the Self. It is a grand experience. You will be struck with awe and wonder.

This experience arises when the ego and the mind are dissolved. It is a state to be attained by one's own effort. It is limitless, divisionless and infinite, an experience of being and of pure consciousness. When this experience is realised, the mind, desires, actions and feelings of joy and sorrow vanish into a void.

The Jiva-hood has gone now. The little 'I' has

melted. The differentiating mind that splits up has vanished. All barriers, all sense of duality, differences, separateness have disappeared. There is no idea of time and space. There is only eternity.

Sing Om Om is your real name. Om is Atma. Om is Brahman. Om is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. Om is Silence. Om is your centre. Om is your refuge. Om is heart (Hridaya). Do Japa of Om. Chant Om. Feel Om. Live in Om. Om is everything. Hum. Live in Truth. Feel His presence always everywhere, in flowers, and trees, in stones and chairs, in birds and dogs, in sun and stars. Enter the Silence. Rejoice in Atma. Rejoice in the light of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss. There is a vast ocean of Ananda. (Bliss) and knowledge at the back of the mind. Drive the mind back to its source (Yoni) and support (Adhistan).

Remember Om. Remember Soham, Om Sivoham, Sivoham, Aham Brahma Asmi, Anahaku. Truth is One. These Mantras remind you of your identity with the Supreme Soul. They are Mahavakyas (great sentences) of the Upanishads. They blow out this little false ego, this illusory 'I' into an airy nothing.

Silence is Atma. Atma is Maha Mouna (great silence) "Ayam Atma Santo—This Atma is silence", is the declaration of the Srutis. Centre is Atma. Forget not this centre whatever may be your avo-

cation or circumstances. There is no room for despair. *Nil desperandum*. Be up and doing, my friends. Even the vilest of us shall attain salvation. Hear once more the words of promises given by Lord Krishna: "Kaunteya! pratijaaneehi na me bhaktah pranasyati" O Kaunteya! Know thou for certain that my devotee perisheth never" (Gita IX 31).

Rest in the centre and draw peace and strength. Aspire and draw. You will have to keep the knowledge of Atma steady (Thaila-Dharavat)-like the steady flow of oil from one vessel to another. You must get Brahmakara Vritti Sthithi (getting established in the centre). When you think of Atma, when the thoughts of objects subside, this Brahmakara Vritti arises from the Sattwic Antahkarana (pure mind). When the flow of Brahmic idea is quite steady, you will have Sahaja Nishtha or natural state. This is Swajaateeya Vritti Pravaha (inundation of ideas of Self alone).

A little practice in right earnest is indispensably requisite. Practice in Jnana Yoga can be done at all times. Sometimes when you are free and when you have leisure, you can retire into a room for deep meditation. For Jnana-Yoga no Asana or room is necessary. Keep up the Brahmakara Vritti (feeling of the idea of Infinity) while walking, talking, eating, etc.

Whenever you see objects, deny or reject the names and forms which are changing—Jada (insentient) and Vinasi (Perishable) and take out the hidden

Antar-Atma (Asti-Bhati-Priya) which is Satchidananda. In course of time the illusory names and forms will vanish. You will enter into Bhava Samadhi or Samyak Jnana or Bahir Nirvikalpa.

May Holiness, Glory, Splendour, Honour, Peace, Power and Poise attend on thee for ever. Thou art Soul. Thou art Truth. Thou art Atma. Thou art Brahman. Thou art Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute in essence when you delete Upadhis (limiting adjuncts, viz., Mind, Indriyas, Prana, body and causal body). "Tat Twam Asi" my dear friends !

35. SAVIKALPA AND NIRVIKALPA SAMADHI

The Samadhi that is practised is of two kinds viz., Savikalpa and Nirvikalpa. Again Savikalpa Samadhi is of two kinds viz., Drishyanuvid when it is associated with an object and Shabdanuvid when it is connected with a sound.

Meditate on the consciousness as the witness for the modification of the mind such as desire etc., which are to be regarded as perceivable objects. This is inner Antar Drishyanuvid Savikalpa Samadhi.

I am Asanga (unattached) Sat-Chit-Ananda, self-luminous, Adwaita Swaroopa. This is Antar Shabdanuvid Savikalpa Samadhi.

That steady state of mind like the unflickering flame of a light kept in a place free from wind wherein one gets indifferent to both objects and sounds owing to his total merging in the realisation of his own real Self (Brahman) is termed Antar Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

Just as you practise meditation inside the heart, when you see the Sat Vastu—Brahman—only in the external objects by separating the names and forms it is termed Bahir Drishyanuvid Savikalpa Samadhi.

That constant reflection that the unlimited Sat-Chit-Ananda Vastu which is always of one nature is Brahman, is the middle kind of Samadhi or Bahir Shabdanuvid Savikalpa Samadhi.

By the practice and experience of the above two kinds of Samadhi that steady state of the mind produced owing to the realisation of Bliss like the ocean without waves is called the third kind of Samadhi or Bahir Nirvikalpa Samadhi. One should always spend his time in these six kinds of Samadhi.

By these Samadhis the identification with body, vanishes and the Highest Self is realised and the mind is always in Samadhi wherever (or whatever place) and to whatever object is directed (or runs on there).

36. SIX KINDS OF JNANA YOGA SAMADHIS

Antar Drishyanuvid Savikalpa, Antah Sabdanuvid Savikalpa, Antar Nirvikalpa, Bahya Drishyanuvid Savikalpa, Bahya Sabdanuvid Bahya Nirvikalpa are the six kinds of Samadhis.

The visible objects, and the Vrittis of anger, lust etc., are the manifestations of Brahman. The Drik or Brahman who silently witnesses all the visibles and the Vrittis, who is hidden in the Vrittis and visible like the thread of a flower garland is the Sakshi or witness or the Knower of everything.

All the Vrittis or mental modifications are clearly seen by the Silent Witness or Brahman. The visible (Drishya) are not distinct from the Drik or seer (Sakshi or witness). Everything is the manifestation or embodiment of the Drik or seer. Visibles are nothing but the Drik or seer. Investigation or enquiry like this (Swaroopā Anusandhana) is Antardrishyanuvid Savikalpa Samadhi.

The Samadhi is that is associated with the mental repetition, reflection, Bhava and feeling and identification "I am Asanga Brahman" "I am self-luminous Immortal Self" "I am Sat-Chit-Ananda Brahman" is Antar Sabdanuvid Savikalpa Samadhi. The visibles are melted or dissolved or involved in Brahman through the process of Layachintan. Layachintan is reflection in the following manner. "The earth is

involved into its cause water, water into its cause fire, fire into air, air into ether, ether in Tamas, Tamas in Avyaktam or Mula Prakriti and Avyaktam in Brahman. Nothing exists now. Everything is Brahman. This is a new kind of vision or Drishti created through a Vedantic Yukti.

If you give up the above two kinds of Samadhis along with all sorts of mental activities, if you remain in a thoughtless state. (Nischinta) as an embodiment of Suddha Chinmatra Rupa Brahman then this is called Antarnirvikalpa Samadhi. Just as you practise the three kinds of internal Samadhis so also you will have to practise the three kinds of external Samadhis also in order to destroy all kinds of duality.

The world of names and forms is superimposed upon Brahman just as snake is superimposed on the rope. Just as the water that is mixed with foam, whiteness, etc., is called a wave in the ocean, so also the Swaropa that is constituted of five things collectively, viz, Sat-Chit-Ananda Nama Rupa is called Prapancha. You will have to delete the superimposed names and forms and to view the world as the Sat-Chit-Ananda Brahman alone. This is Bahya Drishyanuvid Savikalpa Samadhi. You will have to melt or dissolve the names and forms in the Brahman with the firm determination that there really exists nothing save Sat-Chit-Ananda Brahman and then to identify yourself with the Brahman.

Adwaita, blissful eliminating or negating the superimposed names and forms is Bahya Sabdanuvid

Savikalpa Samadhi. That steady thoughtless state like the waveless ocean in which the sage has become one with the Brahman without any sort of mental or physical activity just as the lump of salt when dissolved in water becomes one with water is **Bahya Nirvikalpa Samadhi.** The mind of a sage who has practised these six kinds of Samadhis enters into Samadhi whenever it moves about. That sage who is established in this Nirvikalpa Samadhi is a **Gunateeta, Bhagavad Bhakta, Ativarnashrami** or a **Brahmana.**

37. SAMADHI ACCORDING TO THE UPANISHADS

1. Samadhi is that state of pure consciousness, the supreme blissful state, free from the triad (the meditator, meditated and meditation). It is the state where the Jeevatma becomes one with the Paramatmā.

2. The Chitta or mind that is steady like the flame of a lamp in a windless place which has given up the idea of meditator, and meditation and which constantly dwells in the Dhyeya Vastu or Brahman, is Samadhi.

3. The mind when it is free from thoughts, desires, and motion, merges in the Supreme Brahman, This state is Samadhi.

4. When, through knowledge of the Self which is seated within one's heart he attains Vijnana or direct realisation and when the body-idea is completely eradicated and when peace is attained, in that state the Vrittis, mind and intellect are destroyed. This state of destruction of mind is Samadhi.

5. Having controlled the Prana and Apana during Kumbhak with the gaze steady fixed at the tip of the nose, performing the Shanmukha Mudra with the fingers of the two hands, the mind merges itself in the sound of Pranava or OM.

6. After the dribbling of nectar, like the milk from the cow's udder the group of senses becomes calm by withdrawal and then results Manonasha (destruction of the mind). This is Yoga Samadhi.

7. When the five organs of knowledge are at rest together with the mind and when the intellect ceases functioning or becomes calm that they (the seers) call the highest state.

8. When all Sankalpas (desires) of the mind become calm, when the mind is neither waking nor sleeping, when it is motionless and calm like a stone, the highest Brahmic state of Samadhi is attained.

9. When the Prana moves in the middle (the Sushumna leaving both the Ida and Pingala) the mind becomes steady. Perfect state of tranquillity of the mind is the Brahmic state of Samadhi called Manonmani.

10. The Jeevanmukta attains Saroopamanonasha which leaves behind a slight trace of ego. But for a Videhamukta there is complete destruction of the ego, sleep and all sins. He attains Aroopamanonasha

11. When the Chitta or mind is free from all flickering desires, when the mind is destroyed, the peaceful state which is like unto Sushupti or deep sleep while (the Yogi is) awake.

12. That state is neither waking nor dreaming on account of the absence of Sankalpa or desire. It is not also Sushupti or sleep because of the absence of inertness there.

13. Knowledge of Sattwa or Brahman which is like the fire which burns up the grass of Vasanas (desires) is indicated by the word Samadhi and not the state of inertia or mere silence.

14. The complete eradication of Vrittis caused by the destruction of thoughts by generating the

Brahmakara Vritti or meditation on Brahman is called Samadhi.

15. When the currents of Raga Dwesha attain a feeble state by the knowledge that Brahman is not any of the objects seen or heard of, the steadiness in the knowledge of Brahman is strengthened by the practice of knowledge and dispassion and this state (Nishtha) is known as Samadhi.

16. "I am the Supreme Brahman; I am Brahman alone" when this one thought remains to the exclusion of all other thoughts, it is called Samadhi.

17. The rising of knowledge of the identity of Jeevatma and Paramatman and the complete forgetfulness of meditation (Triputi) is called Samadhi.

18. O wise man! The sages understand Samadhi to be that state of supreme intelligence or pure consciousness attained by the self-controlled satiated Chitta, which points out the way to the knowledge of Brahman.

19. The state of the mind which is devoid of changing thoughts, free from egoism and which does not follow the course of the pairs of opposites—heat and cold, pleasure and pain etc.,—is Samadhi. The steady position of the Merudanda (spine) is also indicated by Samadhi.

20. The state of steadiness of the mind, free from all craving for sensual enjoyment, free from the ideas of enjoyment, free from the ideas of acquiring and giving up, that state of fulness of the mind is called Samadhi.

21. The merging of the mind into the Atman like salt put in water is called Samadhi.

22. Destruction of all Sankalpas and knowledge of the Sameness of Jiva and Brahman without the least difference is called Samadhi.

23. Devoid of Vrittis, devoid of mind and intellect, devoid of decay, devoid of all changes, is the state of Samadhi.

24. The steady flow of Brahmakara Vritti, devoid of the egoism, which asserts "I am this body," "I am the mind," etc., caused by the practice of meditation is called Samprajnata Samadhi.

25. The Samadhi wherein there is destruction of all Vasanas or Vrittis of the mind and which brings face to face the enjoyment of the Supreme blissful state is termed Asamprajnata Samadhi—dear to the Yogins !

26. Leaving aside all the objects, consisting of names and forms by the direct realisation of the bliss of the Atman, the mind becomes steady like flame in a windless place. This is Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

27. The light of consciousness lighted up by the steady flow of Antarmukha Vritti (fixing the mind on the Atman) is the Samadhi practised by sages wherein all desires drop away by themselves.

28. Samadhi is that real state of direct realisation of the supreme Self which is all auspiciousness which is all-full, all-pervading and fills the above, below and the intervening spaces.

38. SAMADHI IN SIX MONTHS

Samadhi is union with God or Brahman. If you are an Uttama Adhikari, first-class aspirant, equipped with the four means or qualifications and endowed with Teevra Vairagya and an intense longing for liberation and if you have a Brahmasrottri Brahmanishtha like Sri Sankara or Lord Krishna, to back you up, you will realise the Self in the twinkling of an eye. Within the time taken to squeeze a flower with your fingers, you can realise the Self. Within the time taken for a grain of gram to roll when placed on the outer surface of a pot, you can have Antar Darshan. There is no difficulty at all. The aspirant should be like Hastamalaka or Padmapada or Sri Sankara or Arjuna or Lord Krishna. He should have intense devotion towards his Guru. Sraddha is a great qualification in the path of Jnana Yoga. It is rational faith here, while in Bhatki Yoga it is a blind faith. If the ground of Antahkarana is not well prepared, if there is no 'Chitta Suddhi' (purity of heart) even Ishwara, even thousand Sankaras or Krishnas cannot do anything in this matter. Be rest assured of this. Through Ashtavakra, Raja Janaka realised within the twinkling of an eye. Arjuna had Self-realisation in the battlefield within an hour and a half.

Mukunda Rai (of Maharashtra) put a Badashaha on Samadhi in a second, when he was on horse-back. There are so many instances.

In this Kali Yuga you need not do much Tapas as people did in days of yore. People used to stand on one leg for several years, before. They did many austerities. This you will find in Mahabharata and other religious books. Isvara has shown His mercy on people of this age owing to the poor physique and short duration of life. By Tapas and meditation one can realise very quickly if he is earnest, sincere and vigilant in this age. When you want to catch a train at 4 a.m. in the morning, how vigilant, cautious and nimble you are. You prepare the bundles at night. You prepare at night some sweets or eatables for the morning 'Chota-hazri'. You adjust the alarm in the timepiece to get up at 3 a.m. So many other things you do. If you show even a tenth part of this vigilance, sincerity, dexterity in the spiritual line also, you can have Samadhi in six months. No one on earth or heaven can prevent you from getting at it.

39. SAMADHI IN SIX MONTHS AS ENJOINED IN MAHABHARATA

Gathering his mind, the Yogi should retire to a mountain cave, a temple or a secluded room. He should not associate with anything through mind, speech and action; for accumulation of and association with things cause misery to Yogis. He should cultivate indifference towards everything. He should be regular about his diet. Worldly gain should cause him no pleasure, nor worldly loss any sorrow. He should look upon one with an equal eye both who censures him and one who bows before him. Whether good is happening to anybody or evil, he should not reflect. When there is gain he should not be besides himself with joy, nor should he worry when there is loss. He should look upon all beings with an equal eye and should remain unattached like the air. He who thus keeps his mind in health, works for others, cultivates an equal eye towards everything and everybody, and lives for six months a regular disciplined life can realise Brahman and attain Brahma-hood (Nirvikalpa Samadhi) himself.

40. SOME EXPERIENCES IN SAMADHI

Sage Uddalaka's Experience

The Sage Uddalaka was not able to master Samadhi which leads one into the blissful realm of Reality, because the monkey-mind jumped speedily from one branch to another of sensual objects. He seated himself in Padmasana and uttered Pranava (OM) with high sounding intonation. Then he started his meditation.

He forcibly controlled his mind. With great difficulty he separated the senses from the objects. He dissociated himself completely from all external objects. He closed the avenues of the body. He fixed his mind in the heart. His mind was freed from all the Vikalpas. He destroyed all thoughts of objects just as a warrior kills with his sword his foes who rise against him again and again.

He saw before him a radiant light. He dispelled Moha. He passed through the stage of darkness, light, sleep and Moha. He eventually reached the stage of Nirvikalpa Samadhi and enjoyed perfect calmness. After six months, he woke from his Samadhi. He would spend in one sitting, days, months and even years in deep Samadhi and then wake up.

King Janaka's Experience

"Till now I have not been able to bore a hole in this pearl of mind. Now I will do so and make a

rosary of it by stringing it in the string of experience and wear it on my person. I have learnt it all through the omniscient Siddhas, as my Gurus. I am now in the enjoyment of that bliss which pertains to the pure Brahman. I have gradually dispelled from my mind such unrealities as I, you and other differences of conception. I will never hereafter bring them back to my mind. I am now victorious in the conflict with my great adversary of the mind which spoiled my Atma Jnana. I have completely divested myself of all the pains which afflicted me. I have attained the life of quiescence. O discriminative Jnana which uplifted me to this lofty state, I adore thee".

Thus did King Janaka remain statue-like in Samadhi, after having destroyed all fluctuations of mind. After being in it for a long time, he returned from it and then surveyed the universe through his quiescent mind—his impure one having been destroyed past resurrection—with the following remarks: 'What object is there in this world for me to encompass? What is illusory? To my present scrutinizing eye, all is pure Jnana only. I cognise nothing but the one immaculate Atma Jnana—my own Reality. I will never long for any object I do not come across; nor will I evince any aversion towards any object that I do not come by. I will remain immutably fixed in my own Self of Atma Jnana. Things will happen as pre-ordained.' So saying, the king was absorbed with Brahmic bliss in the non-dual state.

King Bali's Experience

The King Bali fell to meditating upon the universe and became convinced of the truth of the words of his Acharya, exclaiming thus: "This supreme earth is no other than Jnana; the three Lokas are Jnana; my real nature is Jnana; all the ordained Karmas are Jnana only. I have now become that resplendent Brahmic One which shines in its real nature, devoid of the visibles and the visual. I have now become that all-full Principle which, being of the nature of Jnana without any objects to bind it pervades all objects at one and the same time, and is the quiescent Jnana-Akas and intelligence itself". Then contemplating upon (or uttering) Pranava (OM) mentally, which is the real significance of the Absolute Jnana, he entered trance like into Dhyana (meditative) state and then freed from San-kalpas, karmas, the three kinds of desires (for wife, sons and wealth), doubts, contemplation, intelligence and objects as well as their substratum, the knower, he was statue-like in Samadhi for a long period. Thus did the Emperor Bali remain immobile like the light of a lamp in a windless place. And since he shone as the Absolute Sat, without the stains of love and hate and with a replete mind, such a state can best be likened to a clear sky in the autumnal season when no clouds mantle it.

When the Emperor passed thus his days in Samadhi, the courtiers serving under him repaired to the topmost storey of the king's mansion in search of him. There they found him in Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

After a long time, he awoke and began to perform the regal duties with a mind free from desires and egoism. Through his stainless mind, he was never flurried in adversity or prosperity, neither did he sink nor swim amidst pleasures or pains. Thus was he with an equal eye over all.

However unlimited were the armies of good and bad thoughts that cropped up unceasingly in his mind, however countless were the objects, imaginary and real, that manifested themselves before him, yet he was able to control them all in one centre.

Kacha's Experience

Once upon a time Kacha after having returned from the Supreme Samadhi, he was in, exclaimed thus with an exhilarating heart and a voice that did not know how to find its expression through its ecstatic enjoyment. What is it that I shall have to do? To which quarters shall I fly (there being none for me now)? What shall I cease to perform or abstain from? Like the flood of the deluge, my Self alone pervades everywhere in this world. Whether in body or out of it, in the quarters or Akasa or in the earth or any other place, my Self alone pervades. There is no object which is not found in my Own Self. The Self-shining One is no other than my own Self and this Satçhidananda alone shines (or is).

41. OBSTACLES TO SAMADHI

Be courageous friends! You will come across various obstacles when you endeavour to control the mind and enter into Samadhi. You will have to conquer over Laya (mental inactivity), Vikshepa (distractions), Kashaya (passion) and Sukharaga (taste for pleasure).

Laya or mental inactivity is a state which is equivalent to deep sleep. This is as much a source of evil as passion.

Wake up the mind in Laya. Even though you have conquered over Laya and distraction by repeated practice, by Vairagya, and Jnanabhyas or Brahma Chintan, yet the mind will not enter into a state of perfect balance or serenity. It will be in an intermediate stage. The mind is still not freed from Raga or attachment which is the seed of all its activity in the direction of external objects. There is still lurking passion or hidden Vasanas or Kashaya. You will have to restrain the mind again and again by Vichara and do rigorous meditation and practice of Samprajnata or Savikalpa Samadhi. Finally you must rest yourself in Asamprajnata or seedless Samadhi (Nirbeeja Samadhi).

You are not able to enter into Samadhi, because you are not able to practise meditation. You are not able to do profound meditation, because you are not able to fix the mind steadily or concentrate. You are not able to concentrate properly, because you are not able to practise Pratyahara or the withdrawal of the senses from the objects thoroughly. You are not able to practise Pratyahara thoroughly,

because you have not obtained mastery over Asans and Prana through Pranayam and you are not established in Yama and Niyama, which are the foundation of Yōga.

The aspirant who wants to attain Samadhi should have pittance like that of the bird Tittibha which tried to empty the ocean with its beak. Once he makes a firm resolve, gods will come to his help in the same way that Garuda came to the help of Tittibha. Help invariably comes from all beings in a righteous act. Even the monkeys and squirrels helped Rama to rescue Sita. He who is endowed with self-control, courage, prowess, fortitude, patience and perseverance, strength and skill, can achieve anything. You should never give up your attempt even if you face insurmountable difficulties.

Whenever desires trouble you, try to attain Vairagya by looking into the defects of sensual life. Cultivate dispassion or indifference to sensual pleasures. Think that enjoyment produces pain and various troubles and everything is perishable. Withdraw the mind again and again from the objects and fix it on the Immortal Self or the picture of the Lord. When the mind attains a state of equanimity, when it is freed from distraction and Laya, do not disturb it.

You must wean the mind from the pleasure of Savikalpa Samadhi which is called Rasaswada. Rasaswada also is an obstacle. This prevents aspirant from attaining the Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Some aspirants get false contentment from attaining this happiness and stop their Sadhana. They do not attempt to attain the Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

42. PSEUDO SAMADHI

At one time, in one of my unusual journeys out of Ananda Kutir, a well-dressed gentleman sitting by my side in the railway compartment held out a sheet of newspaper to me and said: "Swamiji, do you know this Swami? He recently held a demonstration of Samadhi. He buried himself underground, in a box for full forty-two days, and came out only on the 43rd day, after the lid of the box was opened. All this happened in the presence of the Collector, Professors of University, Doctors and others." I personally had not seen a newspaper these two decades. But the matter was so interesting as to grip the mind of any intelligent thinker or even of a scientist. I then looked into the face of the inquirer and said: "Well, it is no true Samadhi. It is only Jada Samadhi; the Sadhu must have come to know of some Himalayan herb and must have tested its effect on him on many a previous occasion. For Samadhi is not a state to be demonstrated and cannot be demonstrated also. Men who have purified their heart, men who are extremely devoted to God alone can enter into that highest state of Yoga and such persons do not demonstrate it before the public." But the co-traveller did not seem to lose his curiosity.

At another time, some aspirant held out before me a noted weekly of India and pointed out to me

the picture of a South Indian who demonstrated Samadhi for about 24 hours or so burying himself underground

I desire to write about another humorous instance of a youngster who came to me for Sadhana. One day he closed all the doors of his Kutir, sat inside in an ordinary Asan, and went on doing Tratak, concentration and meditation on Lord Narayana's picture. His breath automatically passed up the lower cavities of the lungs and the Sadhak was seen sitting like a log of wood for 24 hours. His absence at the Ashram kitchen and in the premises created some suspicion and the Ashramites thought it wise to break open the door of his Kutir when all other methods to open the doors failed and no amount of shouting could wake him up from the sleep. On opening the door he was found sitting, with slight movement of breath about the nostrils, his eye-lids flickering now and then, his glottis moving up and down every few seconds. No amount of noise or shouting could wake up the youngster and his whole body looked benumbed except for the above signs of life. I then suggested to one of the Ashramites to press the bridge between the eye-brows a little down, so that his concentration might be lowered. This has its desired effect. The breathing became regular, the subject opened his eyes and like a Rip Van Winkle he glanced at all the corners of the room. In his daily activities, I could hardly find even a tinge of Sat-chit-ananda aspect either in his talk, or in his ways, or in his manners. This instance,

I am forced to quote here, to make the reader understand that this youngster too can start such demonstrations for a few hours by getting himself buried in a box.

Sometimes the man enters into a cataleptic stage, a state of suspended animation during which all the normal indications of life are suspended. The unconscious body is laid down on the sharp edges of two scythe blades, one at his shoulders and the other beneath his ankles. Then a large block of stone weighing more than a hundred-weight is placed on top of him and pounded to pieces with a sledge hammer. When the body is removed there is no sign of a cut or bruise. Sometimes arrows are struck through his body just above the heart until they protrude at the opposite side. His throat is pierced with a knife and his chest is pierced by a dagger. When the weapons are withdrawn there is no sign of a wound. He is able to make the wounds bleed or stop bleeding at will. Such amazing feats may cause wonder in the spectators. But such feats have nothing to do with real Yoga. It is not a sign of indication that the Yogi has reached the highest peak of perfection or realisation. A real Yogi can do such marvellous feats but generally pseudo Yogis perform such feats through jugglery. A real Yogi will never come forward to demonstrate such feats in public.

At one time some Sannyasins in Benares took into their mind to test a Yogi. They had heard of him as one who had been into Samadhi and knowing the

Shastras themselves that the knower of Brahman knows everything, they went to test him. The Yogi rightly stood the test. The Sannyasins asked him to show the way of making a shoe. The Yogin showed them the method of stitching by biting the thread, etc., and rightly demonstrated the way of a shoe-maker. It should be remembered here that the Yogin was not a shoe-maker himself in his Poorvashram nor can it be said that he had observed the method of repairing a shoe so minutely. They asked him "What is the taste of faecal matter"? He replied "It tastes like onion." Then they took a herb from the forest and asked him its name, use, etc. He at once gave them a right answer. These instances I would not have quoted here but to prove that one who has truly entered into Samadhi has the knowledge of all subjects and that too in detail. He knows all languages and can talk in any language. He understands any language. He knows all sciences. That is the reason why in the Upanishads it is said "*Kasminnu Bhagavo Vijanate Sarvamidam Vijnatam bhavati*"—what is that O Bhagavan which being known all this becomes known? He should also know the past, present and the future for he has transcended the three states and the fourth state—the Tureeya—also he has seen.

Samadhi is the highest fruit of Yoga. Through self-purification, through eradication of all evil habits and Samskaras through the cultivation of good and virtuous qualities, through the practice of Yama and Niyama, Asans, regulated Pranayama, Pratyahara,

Dharana and Dhyana resembling the steady flame of the candle, a pious Sadhak tries to have a glimpse of Samadhi which through repeated attempts becomes a daily occurrence to him and then he gradually begins to feel an inner joy to devote the early morning hours, to drink its ambrosial sweetness and then comes down to the common plane to do his normal duties. When he thus advances he prolongs his life too with it. And when he feels that he has lived enough on this plane, he desires himself to enter into it once for all never to return back to the living abode of mortals. His breath gets stuck into the nerves of the brain (Brahmarandhra) and the body becomes completely lifeless. Left to itself the body gradually decays. That is why it is the usual custom in some parts of the country to strike the head of a Sannyasin with cocoanut and break the skull before the body is buried in a masculeum. For it is commonly believed and a fact too that Sannyasins practise Samadhi and their final passing away is termed as entering into Maha Samadhi or Highest Samadhi.

The reader must bear in mind that Samadhi is the culmination point in the spiritual quest of man. Just as the wealth of the mines of Golconda cannot be assessed, the spiritual wealth of this supreme state too cannot be assessed by anybody. It is a state by entering which daily the fortunate Sadhak tries to get into it more and more. It is the Akshaya state—the state of deathlessness.

43. PRASHNOTTARI ON SAMADHI

Query

"To have good meditation or contact with the inner world, if you are obliged to go into Samadhi, then your normal consciousness will remain always the same without changing. In other words, people who have the higher consciousness only in deep meditation, once they come out of it, are not worth than what they were before".

I do not know what you think of this statement.

I had all along believed, and even now believe that Samadhi and contact with the higher reaches of consciousness do affect naturally and influence the whole of our consciousness, outer as well as inner, and a personality does not continue to be the same after it has contact with its own higher consciousness either in deep meditation or in Samadhi.

This statement seems to run counter to this opinion.

If deep meditation and Samadhi do not by themselves bring about a change for the better in the ordinary and general consciousness of a person, it means there is no self-transcendence during these experiences but only self-forgetfulness, as in sleep or while under the influence of narcotic drugs. I am inclined to believe that while self-forgetfulness is mechanical and therefore brings us back to the

same condition from which we went into self-forgetfulness, meditation and Samadhi take us beyond ourselves to higher reaches of consciousness and therefore to self-transcendence and they do bring about by themselves some changes for the better in the personality.

I would very much like you to enlighten me on this point.

Answer

Such doubts and conflicting notions as have been put down are really due to a somewhat loose and generalised use of the term 'Samadhi'. Even in Yoga treatises this word Samadhi is at times used in two distinct ways.

When specifically used in the highest sense of the term, Samadhi implies the serene state of transcendental super-consciousness wherein the sage has the Experience Absolute. When used in a lower generalised sense, the term Samadhi implies either a definite period of continuous unbroken deep meditation, or the total absorption of one's consciousness in the Lakshya or the object meditated upon. Thus, when this object is any one of the inner Chakras (other than Sahasrara), or any one of the lower categories or Tattwas (other than Atman), then the ensuing Samadhi is not necessarily the high superconscious state of self-transcendence. Certainly, even this is not mere self-forgetfulness or sleep, yet nonetheless, these Samadhis are not the same as the Experience Absolute. For instance, in the commen-

tary on the Hatha Yoga Padeepika you have a specific time calculation by which a unit of Samadhi is reckoned. If the meditator keeps up an unbroken flow of deep meditation to that extent, then he is referred to as having experienced Samadhi. Used in this sense, it does not imply the attainment of Atma Jnana or Aparoksha Anubhuti which alone can make a man a transformed being.

The above will make it quite clear to you the reason for the confusion that arises in this connection. A Yogi or Sadhaka who goes into deep meditation, even to the stage of Samadhi, as per the lower calculation just described, does not really have Atma Sakshatkara. In such a case, one may not find a complete transformation of his entire consciousness but when the Yogi (through constant repeated practice of Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi) pierces the veil of Maya or Avarana and attains the stupendous experience of sublime Atmic consciousness then it is a mistake to say that the "normal consciousness will remain always the same without changing". The Yogi who has reached the highest experience in deep Samadhi is no more the same man he was before. He returns forth, an illumined being. Of course, he may not act in any specially peculiar or extraordinary manner. But, nonetheless, there will certainly be a subtle change, a definite transformation of his total normal consciousness. This may not be immediately sensed by all sundry who come into contact with him. But, nevertheless, this change for the better in the

ordinary and general consciousness of the person is definitely there.

Used in the highest sense, Samadhi is neither self-forgetfulness, nor sleep. It is a powerful state of transcendental Self-Awareness. One who comes down from it may live and move about in same ordinary way as before and there may not be any strikingly perceptible change in his extraordinary life and behaviour to the casual beholder. But all the same, the change in his consciousness is undeniably there. What to say of mere change; there will be positive transformation in the personality.

Q u e r y

Samadhi is of not much use unless the person concerned uses it for the purpose of the progress of his outer consciousness. It is like a Ganges-bather who is quite all right when bathing but his old and dirty clothes await him on the shore.

In this the state of things ?

A n s w e r

'Samadhi is not of much use' in the absence of progress in the outer consciousness as well is correct only with reference to lower types of Samadhi and the Jada-avastha of the Hatha Yogi. Here the Yogi has not yet attained the highest Brahma Jnana or Supreme Kaivalya. But the opinion is incorrect if applied with reference to the highest Adwaita Nirvikalpa or Nirbeeja Asamprajnata Samadhi. One who is established in this becomes a transfigured being. Both his inner and outer

consciousness are exalted. With the attainment of the highest Nirvikalpa Samadhi, there is progress simultaneously in the outer consciousness also. This is the state of a Jeevanmukta, who is in Sahaja Avastha. Gold remains gold even if it is wrapped up in a rag. The perfected consciousness of a sage even when he comes down into the field of normal activity, remains unaltered and unsullied. It is not affected. Entering into and engaging in normal Vyavahara of Jagrat Avastha cannot in the least bit affect such a sage established in Sahaja Avastha.

The attainment of Samadhi is never futile or without use. The greatest benefit that an individual can bestow upon mankind is to attain Self-realisation and spiritual perfection. By this he contributes in a tangible and a most vital and substantial manner to the evolution of the total consciousness of human race upon earth. This is the Truth.

There is, however, a view held by some that the active outward manifestation (for the benefit of the vast mankind) of this exalted inward superconsciousness is essential if this lofty attainment, i.e., Samadhi, is considered to be of any real use. This is a question of points of view. Kindly note, however, that when a sage becomes established in Samadhi, progress of his outer consciousness also automatically follows this attainment. The inward perfection cannot but express itself as a distinct transformation in the outer consciousness also. Later, a stage is reached when the inner and the outer consciousness partake of the very

same quality with hardly any difference between the two. This is the state of Sahaja Samadhi.

The illustration of the Ganges bather and his return to the bank does not seem to be quite so appropriate. Rather, the experience is to be likened unto the contact of a piece of iron with the philosopher's stone. The result is essential and enduring. However, certain traits of the Yogi's normal human personality may still be present in him during the ordinary intercourse with men, but certainly none of these will ever be such as would contradict in the slightest degree the sublime quality of his spiritual experience

This exalted state of superconsciousness is a matter for actual personal experience. This is the true aim in life. Perfect Vairagya and intense spiritual Sadhana alone can lead to Realisation.

CHAPTER V

SOME YOGIC EXPERIENCE

CHAPTER V
SOME YOGIC EXPERIENCE

44, EXPERIENCES OF A YOGI

When the fivefold quality of Yoga, arising from earth, water, fire, air and ether, has been produced, then the Yogi is endowed with body made strong by the fire of Yoga and so he will not be affected by disease, old age and death.

The quality of each element, i.e., smell of earth, taste of water, sound of ether, form of fire, touch of air, is the Yogaguna. By fixing the mind on the tip of the nose the Yogi experiences divine super-sensuous smell (Divya Gandha). By fixing the mind on the tip of the tongue, he experiences divine taste; by fixing the mind on the fore-part of palate, he experiences divine taste; by fixing the mind on the palate, he experiences divine colour; by fixing the mind on the middle of the tongue, a divine touch, a divine sound. The mind is steadied by means of these divine experiences because it is not attracted by the external objects.

The Yogi obtains an adamantine body (Vajrakaya) through the practice of Pranayama, concentration and Yogic Kriyas. He can keep it as long as he likes. Yogi Chaugdev of Maharashtra kept his body for 1400 years.

45. FOUR CLASSES OF YOGINS

There are four classes of Yogins. (1) Prathamakalpika—He is just a beginner or a neophyte. The light is just appearing. He has not attained any Siddhis. He is just practising Savitarka Samadhi. (2) Madhu Bhumika—One who has entered Nirvartarka Samadhi and who has attained Ritambhara Prajna (intuition). This stage is also called Madhumati, because it brings such knowledge as gives satisfaction, just as honey does. (3) Prajna Jyotis—The Yogi who has attained mastery over elements and senses. This Yogi cannot be moved or tempted by the invitations of celestial beings even. He has attained the stage of Madhu-Prateeka. (4) Atikrantabhavaneeya—This Yogi has attained the Bhumikas (stages of Visoka and Samskara-sesha). He has attained Kaivalya or full independence.

The Raja Yogi can get all Siddhis without Samyama by Pratibha only (by spontaneous illumination through purity). Prasankhyanam is the highest illumination through Viveka Khyati full of discrimination between Purusha and Prakriti.

Siddhis cause positive hindrance to wisdom or the attainment of Self-realisation. They deter and obstruct the aspirant in his march towards the goal. They do not produce perfect non-attachment. That is the reason why Patanjali Maharshi, the author of Raja Yoga again and again says that the Yogic student

should kill the desire for acquiring Siddhis. If he runs towards Siddhis, he will be caught in a big maze and it will be almost impossible for him to get out of the maze. He will misuse the power and get a hopeless fall.

The mind should be perfectly purified. Then only the vessel or the mechanism will be fit to receive the descent of the Divine Light. It should be sufficiently strong to bear the pressure of a sudden expansion of consciousness or cosmic vision which is above mind and which covers the whole existence in one sweep of his new exalted magnanimous experience. Therefore wait patiently if there is delay in the descent of the Divine Light. Grow in purity and strength.

46. SOMAPANA

Amrita Srava

Soma means moon in Sanskrit. Drinking of the nectar which comes from the moon is called Soma Pana. Soma juice or cooling nectar is situated in the lower portion of the skull at the root of the palate. The taste of this juice is very palatable and various juices are produced during the practice. One gets new sensation. First, one experiences a saltish taste, then alkaline, then bitter, then astringent. With further practices he gets the taste of butter, milk, ghee, curds, honey, palm juice, and lastly the taste of nectar. The last one has got a taste which one cannot express in words as there is nothing to compare with the things of the world. So it is called Nectar. This nectar is tasted by keeping the tongue in the root of the soft palate. To get maximum benefit one should try to lengthen the tongue by milking it daily. Then it is folded and kept at the root of the palate with concentrated mind and restraining the breath. This is called 'Nabho Mudra.' When the tongue enters the hole in the palate, great heat is caused in the body. The effect of this is to make ambrosial stream flow from the root of the palate. This juice is also known as Amara Varuni.

It is said in "Hatha Yoga Pradeepika" 45th Sloka in third Chapter the benefit of the drinking of Soma Juice.

"Those Yogins whose body is filled with nectar daily, flowing from the moon which is situated at the root of the palate, even the poison of the serpent Takshaka does not spread throughout his body". The poison cannot affect his system.

"Just like the fire does not go out so long as there is firewood and light of the lamp does not go so long as there is oil and wick, so also the Jiva remains in the body as long as it is vivified by the rays of the moon". (Sloka 46) H.P. 111

"The Yogi who, with upturned face or through the practice of Vipareeta Karani Mudra and closing the hole of the palate by twisting the tongue backwards meditates upon the Sakthi (Kundalini) and drinks the nectar of moon in the head which flows into the sixteen - petalled lotus situated in the throat (Visuddha Chakra) becomes freed from all diseases lives long with a body soft and beautiful as the fibres of a lotus-stem.

Moon is situated in the root of the palate and nectar which flows from the moon is dried up by the sun which is situated in the navel. For checking this, Vipareeta Karani Mudra is practised.

Vipareeta Karani Mudra is just like Sarvangasan. Difference between Sarvangasana and Vipareeta Karani is, in Sarvangasan the chin is pressed with chest and body is straight from the neck onward and in Vipareeta Karani pressure is not given at the neck. Place the head on the ground and raise the legs up. Keep the hands spread on the ground and

remain steady. This is called Vipareeta Karani which prevents the nectar being dried up in the solar plexus situated in the navel.

Both the Nabho Mudra and Vipareeta Karani are very easy to practise. Vipareeta Karani is not practised in the evening.

Yogi Drinks Nectar

Agnimandal, the region of the fire is below the navel; the Suryamandal, the region of the Sun is in and about the heart; the Chandramandal, the region of the moon is in and about the head.

Amritam or nectar oozes out in large quantities from the Chandramandal, the brain of the Yogi. The Yogi assimilates it in his system and keeps alive almost infinitely without partaking of any other food or drink.

The nectar that flows from the Chandramandal in the head is consumed by the fire in the Agnimandal in the navel. By practising Sarvangasan and Vipareetakarani Mudra the nectar nourishes the whole system. One attains long life. Agnimandal is turned upwards now. The fire cannot consume the nectar.

47. EXPERIENCE OF A BHAKTA

The flame of divine love burns in the heart of the thirsting devotee day and night. The devotee never cares for his food and drink. He is emaciated. He pines away from the separation of the Lord. He does not sleep at night. He does not know when the Lord will give Darshan. So he keeps vigil whole night. He does not care for the sarcastic remarks of the world. He pours forth his love on the Lord.

Sometimes the devotee feels the acute pang of separation from the Lord. He feels as if he is roasted in a hot pan over the furnace. Immediately the divine nectar dribbles. Then he feels as if he has taken a plunge in the cool waters of the Ganges.

The devotee cannot bear the separation from the Lord even for a second. A second appears to him as one year. When there is this feeling his eyes become vacant and face becomes blank. There is a burning sensation in the heart. The devotee is restless. He sheds profuse tears. Then his thirst is quenched a bit.

The relish of permanent joy that characterises the divine ecstatic state when the devotee feels the presence of God is known as Rasa. Bhava is the main basis of Rasa. It is the bliss potency of the Lord Himself. It lies in a subtle, unmanifested state within the individual soul. Vibhava is the cause or

extension of Rasa. Anubhava is the effect of Rasa. Stupor, stupefaction, horripilation and the like which constitute the Sattvik Bhava are the specific effects of Rasa.

The nature and essence of Bhava are Pure Chit. The mind of the devotee is reduced to a state of pure Chit owing to the constant practice of devotion. The eight Sattvika Bhavas are Stambha (paralysis), Sveda (perspiration), Romancha (horripilation), Swarabhanga (hoarseness of the voice), Vepathu (trembling), Vaivarnya (change of colour), Ashru (tears), and Pralaya (loss of consciousness).

INNER VOICE

Einstein said that he would still his mind and listen to the inner voice, and would hear the inner answer. The listening is not tenseness but relaxation. It is a passivity, a state akin to sleep, and yet you are far from being sleepy. The conscious mind is partially submerged. Effort is reduced to a minimum. It is a controlled and a disciplined state of mind. All great musicians such as Mozart and others listened to the inner voice. Emerson says in his writings that all his works were created from the outset and all that he did was to still his mind on the Holy Presence, thinking of God, and listening to the voice of the Spirit and then thoughts came into his mind, and he wrote them down. He refers to this procedure as listening to the "primal warblings."

48. STATE OF SPIRITUAL ILLUMINATION

The real nature of Brahma-Jnana or superconsciousness remains a mystery until one experiences it.

Illumination is Nirvikalpa Samadhi or union of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul.

Illumination is cosmic consciousness or Christ Consciousness or Nirvana or Beatific.

It is most difficult to explain this state of illumination in definite and precise words because language is finite and imperfect.

In this exalted state the senses and the mind cease functioning.

The Yogi will have to experience it directly through intuition and Samadhi.

He who has no fear of death is fit for illumination.

He alone can attain the Superconscious state.

The Yogi who wants to enter into Samadhi must have a sharp, subtle and one-pointed intellect, good physique, good health, discrimination, dispassion, serenity and burning yearning for liberation.

The seeker who dedicates his life to the attainment of Supreme Knowledge should practise the fourfold Sadhana. *

Meditative life is a journey over the unknown path which is as straight and narrow as a razor. There is no other light but that of faith to guide the seeker.

no sustenance but devotion, Guru's Grace and Grace of the Lord.

The track cannot be seen, going is uncertain, and pitfalls await the unwary. The seeker must travel in the dark. He must not cry for a torch-light to drop in the gloom, or seek the rash light of reason. He must go steadily forward in the hope of reaching a great illumination, which awaits him at the journey's end. It is a way of life. It cannot be comprehended but it can be realised.

It is difficult to attain the Superconscious state. It may come in a minute or six months for a first-class type of aspirant. It may take years or even lives. *Nil desperandum*. March forward, Adhyatmic hero !

Through the fourfold discipline, the seeker after Truth develops an austere detachment towards the empirical world.

He who has attained illumination or superconsciousness is absolutely free from all sorts of fear. He is born anew. He is completely transformed a God-man. He has double consciousness. He rests in Brahman. He beholds the world within himself and works for the solidarity of the world.

A sage of illumined state has a changed outlook. There is nothing outside for him. He beholds the entire universe within himself. The cosmic sense or the eye of wisdom is awakened in him.

He who is illumined becomes speechless. He is

unable to explain his experience. Through silence he clears the doubts of people.

A sage never loses consciousness of Atma, whatever his physical personality may be engaged in. A small remnant of Avidya or ignorance carries on the functions of body and mind, but the sage or knower does not identify himself with it, and it soon withers away like tree that has lost roots.

In his mere presence people feel that they are in the presence of a God-man, a divine personality without his speaking a word. His face is angelic. It radiates brilliance, joy and peace. His eyes are lustrous. His speech is sweet and inspiring.

The wise man (illumined sage) has neither wealth nor property. He has neither bungalows nor cars yet he attracts the whole world through his wisdom and spiritual power. He is a marvellous spiritual magnet. His spiritual wealth is inexhaustible. Glory to such a wise man of superconsciousness.



CHAPTER VI
KUNDALINI SHAKTI

CHAPTER IV
KUNDALINI SHAKTI

49. PRAYER TO MOTHER KUNDALINI

Wake up Mother Kundalini.

Those whose nature is Bliss Eternal—The Bliss of
Brahman.

Thou dwelling like a serpent asleep at the lotus
of Muladhara.

Sure affected and distressed am I in body and
mind,

Do thou bless me and leave thy place at the
basic lotus.

Consort of Siva, the Self-caused Lord of Universe.

Do thou take thy upward course through the
central canal

Leaving behind Swadhishtana, Manipura, Anahata,
Vishuddha,

And Ajna, Be thou united with Siva, thy Lord
the God.

At Sahasrara—the thousand petalled lotus in
the brain.

Sport there freely, O Mother, Giver of Bliss
Supreme.

Mother, who are Existence, Knowledge, Bliss
Absolute

Wake up, Mother Kundalini, Wake up.

.

50. EXPERIENCES ON AWAKENING OF KUNDALINI

During meditation you behold divine visions, experience divine smell, divine taste, divine touch, hear divine Anahata sounds. You receive instructions from God. These indicate that the Kundalini Shakti has been awakened. When there is throbbing in Mooladhara, when hair stands on its root, when Uddiyana, Jalandhar and Moolabandha come involuntarily, know that Kundalini has awakened.

When the breath stops without any effort, when Kevala Kumbhak comes by itself without any exertion, know that Kundalini Shakti has become active. When you feel currents of Prana rising up to the Sahasrara, when you experience bliss, when you repeat Om automatically, when there are no thoughts of the world in the mind, know that Kundalini Shakti has awakened.

When in your meditation the eyes become fixed on Trikuti, the middle of the eye-brows, when the Sambhavi Mudra operates, know that Kundalini has become active. When you feel vibrations of Prana in different parts inside your body, when you experience jerks like the shocks of electricity, know that Kundalini has become active. During meditation when you feel as if there is no body, when your eyelids become closed and do not open in spite of your exertion, when electric-like currents flow up and

down the nerves, know that Kundalini has awakened.

When you meditate, when you get inspiration and insight, when the nature unfolds its secrets to you, all doubts disappear, you understand clearly the meaning of the Vedic texts, know that Kundalini has become active. When your body becomes light like air, when you have a balanced mind in perturbed condition, when you possess inexhaustible energy for work, know that Kundalini has become active

When you get divine intoxication, when you develop power of oration, know that Kundalini has awakened. When you involuntarily perform different Asans or poses of Yoga without the least pain or fatigue, know that Kundalini has become active. When you compose beautiful sublime hymns and poetry involuntarily, know that Kundalini has become active.

51. THE GRADATIONAL ASCENT OF THE MIND

The Chakras are centres of Sakti as vital force. In other words, these are centres of Pranasakti manifested by Pranavayu in the living body, the presiding Devatas of which are the names for the Universal Consciousness as It manifests in the form of these centres. The Chakras are not perceptible to the gross senses. Even if they were perceptible in the living body which they help to organise, they disappear with the disintegration of organism at death.

Purity of mind leads to perfection in Yoga. Regulate your conduct when you deal with others. Have no feeling of jealousy towards others. Be compassionate. Do not hate sinners. Be kind to all. Success in Yoga will be rapid if you put your maximum energy in your Yogic practice. You must have a keen longing for liberation and intense Vairagya also. You must be sincere and earnest. Intent and constant meditation is necessary for entering into Samadhi.

The mind of a worldly man with base desires and passions moves in the Muladhar and Swadhishtan Chakras or centres situated near the anus at the reproductive organ respectively.

If one's mind becomes purified the mind rises to the Manipura Chakra or the centre in the navel and experiences some power and joy.

If the mind becomes more purified, it rises to the Anahat Chakra or centre in the heart, experiences bliss and visualises the effulgent form of the Ishta Devata or the tutelary deity.

When the mind gets highly purified, when meditation and devotion become intense and profound the mind rises to Visuddha Chakra or the centre in the throat, and experiences more and more powers and bliss. Even when the mind has reached this centre, there is a possibility for it to come down to the lower centres.

When the Yogi reaches the Ajna Chakra or the centre between the two eye-brows he attains Samadhi and realises the supreme Self, or Brahman. There is a slight sense of separateness between the devotee and Brahman. .

If he reaches the spiritual centre in the brain, the Sahasrara Chakra, the thousand-petalled lotus, the Yogi attains Nirvikalpa Samadhi or superconscious state. He becomes one with the non-dual Brahman. All sense of separateness dissolves. This is the highest plane of consciousness or supreme Asamprajnata Samadhi. Kundalini unites with Siva.

The Yogi may come down to the centre in the throat to give instructions to the students and do good to others (Lokasangraha).

THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENTS TO THE PRESENT TIME

BY JAMES M. SMITH

VOLUME I

THE FIRST SETTLEMENTS

THE FIRST SETTLEMENTS

CHAPTER VII
PSYCHIC POWERS

CHAPTER VII
PSYCHIC POWERS

52. SIDDHIS OR OCCULT POWERS

The Yogi becomes the master of all forces in Nature and can utilise them at will. He has perfect control over the elements.

Jnanins through the power of Sat-Sankalpa can do whatever they like with their physical bodies.

The Yogi directly beholds through his Yogic inner eye the Samskaras of his disciples and knows their weaknesses and defects and prescribes the right kind of Sadhana for their quick eradication. A Jnani also can do this. Whatever a Yogi can do through his Yogic Samyama or simultaneous Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi, can be done by a Jnani through his power of Sat-Sankalpa.

Exhibition of Siddhis is no criterion for measuring one's height of spirituality. He who exhibits Siddhi for selfish ends, is a big worldly man. He will soon have his downfall. Sometimes a Yogi may exhibit a miracle to his student just to convince him to the existence of super-sensual things and to encourage him in the spiritual path.

It is stated that the Yogi attains the eight Siddhis viz., Anima, Mahima, etc., and perfection of body by the practice of meditation.

53. EIGHT MAJOR PSYCHIC POWERS

An accomplished, Poorna Yogi is in possession of eight major Siddhis, viz., Anima, Mahima, Laghima, Garima, Prapti, Prakamya, Vashitwam and Ishatwam.

1. Anima. The Yogi can become as minute as he pleases.

2. Mahima. This is the opposite of Anima. He can become as big as he likes. He can make his body assume a very large size. He can fill up the whole universe. He can assume a Virat Swarup.

3. Laghima. He can make his body as light as cotton or feather. Vayustambhan is done through this Siddhi. In Jalastambhan also this power is exercised to a very small degree. The body is rendered light by Plavini Pranayama. The Yogi produces a diminution of his specific gravity by swallowing large draughts of air. The Yogi travels in the sky with the help of this Siddhi. He can travel thousands of miles in a minute.

4. Garima. This is the opposite of Laghima. In this Yogi acquires an increase of specific gravity. He can make the body as heavy as a mountain by swallowing draughts of air.

5. Prapti. The Yogi standing on the earth can touch the highest thing. He can touch the sun or the moon or the sky. Through this Siddhi the Yogi attains his desired objects and supernatural powers

He acquires the power of predicting future events, the power of clairvoyance, clairsaudience, telepathy, thought-reading etc. He can understand the languages of the beasts and birds. He can understand unknown languages also. He can cure all diseases.

6. **Prakamya** He can dive into the water and can come out at any time he likes. The late Trilinga Swami of Banaras used to live for six months underneath the Ganges. It is the process by which the Yogi makes himself invisible sometimes. By some writers it is defined to be the power of entering the body of another (Parakaya Pravesha). Sri Sankara entered the body of Raja Amara of Banaras. Tirumular in Southern India entered the body of a shepherd. Raja Vikramaditya also did this. It is also the power of keeping a youth-like appearance for any length of time. Raja Yayaati had this power.

7. **Vashitwam**. This is the power of taming wild animals and bringing them under control. It is the power of mesmerising persons by the exercise of will and of making them obedient to one's own wishes and orders. It is the restraint of passions and emotions. It is the power to bring men, women and the elements under subjection.

8. **Ishatwam**. It is the attainment of divine power. The Yogi becomes the Lord of the universe. The Yogi who has this power can restore life to the dead. Kabir, Tulsi Das, Akalkot Swami and others had this power of bringing back life to the dead.

54. OTHER PSYCHIC POWERS

The Yogi acquires the following minor psychic powers :

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst.
2. Freedom from the effects of heat and cold.
3. Freedom from Raga-dwesha.
4. Doora-darshan or clairvoyance or Doora-drishti.
5. Doora-sravan, clairaudience or Doora-sruti and Doora-pravachana.
6. Mano-jaya, control of mind.
7. Kama-rupa. The Yogi can take any form he likes.
8. Parakaya Pravesha. He can enter into another body, can animate a dead body and enter into it by transferring his soul.
9. Iccha Mrityu. Death at his will.
10. Devanam Saha Kreedha and Darshan. Playing with the Devas after seeing them.
11. Yatha Sankalpa. Can get whatever he likes.
12. Trikaala Jnana. Knowledge of past, present and future.
13. Adwandwa. Beyond the pairs of the opposites.
14. Vak Siddhi. Whatever the Yogi predicts will come to pass by the practice of Satya, prophecy.
15. The Yogi can turn base metals into gold.

16. Kaya Vyuha. Taking as many bodies as the Yogi likes to exhaust all his Karmas in one life.
17. Darduri Siddhi. The jumping power of a frog.
18. Patala Siddhi. The Yogi becomes the Lord of desires, destroys sorrows and diseases.
19. He gets knowledge of his past life.
20. He gets knowledge of the cluster of stars and planets.
21. He gets the power of perceiving the Siddhas.
22. He gets mastery of the elements (Bhuta jaya) and mastery of Prana (Prana Jaya).
23. Kamachari. He can move to any place he likes.
24. He gets omnipotence and omniscience.
25. Vayu Siddhi. The Yogi rises in the air; leaves the ground.
26. He can point out the place where a hidden treasure lies.

55. LEVITATION OR VAYU-SIDDHI

Numerous aspirants are drawn towards the practice of Yoga, specially Hata Yoga or Kundalini Yoga, by the thought of the extraordinary powers they are likely to acquire through it. The idea of possessing such powers seems to exercise a strange fascination on very many young people both of the East and the West. An earnest and diligent practice of Yoga with the rigid discipline and perseverance, no doubt, brings in its wake unusual powers and apparently strange experiences, but these Siddhis, minor or major, it must be remembered, do not constitute the essential and true Yoga in the deepest sense of the term. They are not to be taken for the goal. But rather they are the indicators of the stage reached. They are indicators of the progress the practitioner has made. They serve to give him his bearings even as milestones show to the traveller where he is.

Levitation is an experience the Yogi comes to have when he begins to attain perfection in Pranayam. When the prana begins to move in the central Nadi or the Sushumna, levitation occurs. Levitation happens when the Yogi has succeeded in retaining the pranic energy within the Sushumna, which is situated in the Spinal column. In the beginning the pranic energy may just enter and leave the Sushumna. It does not remain there.

However, through the combined operation of Pranayama, Mudra bandha and will-power, the Yogi gradually forces the energy to remain within the Sushumna. The practitioner makes use of auto-suggestion also in this process. When he succeeds in thus retaining the Prana in the Sushumna, then the body leaves the ground and rises in the air. The Yoga texts mention the three stages through which the practitioner passes in attaining levitation. As he progresses in Pranayam, he first experiences profuse perspiration of the body. Next, he attains a state when there is experience of tremors in the body. This specially felt along the course of the spine. When the third stage is reached, the body leaves the ground and moves in the air.

The first inkling that the practitioner gets as he nears this stage is the peculiar sensation of rising from the ground. This sensation he feels even when actually he is still on the ground. When the Prana is forcibly retained through will-power, strong imagination, auto suggestion, as well as Pranayama with Bandha, the retained Prana begins to rise upward. Then, together with the peculiar feeling the Yogi actually leaves and rises from the ground.

Levitation is brought about by combination of several factors. The main factor is the extraordinary lightness attained by the body when the Prana enters the Sushumna and is confined therein. This extreme lightness is actually felt by the Yogi. He feels like a feather. His lightness makes him rise from the ground. Secondly, at this stage of the Pranayam, the

Kundalini is activated. The upward surge of the Kundalini shakti propels along with it the body, which in its extremely lightened condition, offers very little resistance. A third factor is the powerful radiation which is set up from the Kundalini at the Mooladhara, Centre. These forceful radiations which take place at this time due to the awakened Kundalini being powerfully stimulated by the pranic energy go out in all directions. The direct downward radiations 'hit the earth' as it were and have the effect of giving an upward push to the Yogi's body. These radiations are invisible but tangible to the experience of the practitioner. Their action is felt to be somewhat similar to the backward kick that the explosive charge in a rocket gives and which pushes the rocket up forcibly. The radiations act in such an effective manner particularly due to the fact that the body is rendered almost weightless at this stage. The weightless condition of the body, combined with the upward propulsion of the Kundalini, together with the push of its radiations all result in its overcoming the operation of gravity.

For attaining Vayu Siddhi one should be a whole-timed practitioner of Pranayam. He should practise 3 times daily Anuloma Viloma Pranayam 40 rounds in each sitting regularly without break, for several months or years. This will purify the Nadis and make it easier for the Prana to move within the central canal or Sushumna. Then with the further practice of Bhastrika together with the Bandhas

raises the Prana in the Sushumna. Again through the concentration and Bandhas the movement of Prana is restricted in the Sushumna.

During the practice one should live on milk and fruits or a kind of rice and milk diet only. The practitioner should avoid too much walking, or pilgrimage or too much exertion of any kind, too much sleeping, eating Rajasic and Tamasic type of foods, basking in the sun, sitting, near the fire, taking cold bath and fasting completely. Strict Brahmacharya should be maintained.

When Vayu Siddhi is attained the practitioner has reached the stage of Pratyahara.

Instructions from a practical guide are always necessary even though the guide may not be near the student. In the absence of a practical guide or when one cannot get in touch with his master he should pray to God or his Guru for enlightenment and removing obstacles.

Faith in the Yoga Sastras and Guru is very essential. Otherwise when one cannot find required results he leaves off Yoga stating it to be humbug.

Patience and perseverance are the next important points for success in Yoga. One should lead a life of purity and dedicate his entire actions to Lord.

56. KAYA SAMPAT

By the process of Hatha Yoga, the Yogi attains a perfect physical body—*Rupalavanya bala vajra-samhanana kaya sampat*. "The perfection of the body consists in beauty, grace, strength and adamant hardness." The power to bear extreme cold and heat (Titiksha), the power to live without water and food and other powers come under the category of Kaya Sampat (perfection of body)

Since the body of the Hatha Yogi is perfect and firm, his mind also is firm and one-pointed. By the practice of Dharana and Dhyana, he reaches the highest rung in the Yogic ladder and attains Immortality through Yogic Samadhi. The Yogi who has reached the highest stage will have all kinds of occult powers.

57. COMMENTS ON SOME OCCULT PHENOMENA

Queries

(1) There was very recently an English lady, 70 years old, here in Ranchi. She had taken Sannyas from that sect which takes the title of Puri at the end of new names that are given at the time of Sannyas. Her name is.....She was subject to some visions etc. when she was in England. She came over to India on the eve of the Second World War on a caution that came to her (that England would be in danger) in a half dream vision like thing. After coming here she took Sannyas.

With her was staying a person who was a poker in his occupation before coming here. He too was an Englishman but he was subject to trances. Whenever there was a sitting, if questions were asked of him, he would always give replies highly philosophical and spiritual in character. While replies were being given, they were taken down verbatim by the Sannyasini. Since the replies were brief or not very long, she herself wrote down explanations and comments. The whole thing has developed into something like 80 pages of this kind of question and reply. She says that what she calls 'Brothers' speak through him. Much of what he says during those trances is Upanishadic thought very well and clearly put, though briefly.

(2) As late as a month and a half before, I was in Bombay. There was a person called Shri ..When requested by a friend of mine there, I wrote down three questions on a piece of paper, rolled it up and just let down on a half sheet which was spread. He was sitting just in front of us. He did not touch either the half sheet or the piece that I had rolled and thrown on it. Within about 10 to 15 minutes, without moving from where he was or doing anything out of the way, he wrote down on another slip of paper all the three questions exactly word to word as I had written them, and also the replies. He did the same with another set of questions which my friend, wrote down and presented in a similar manner.

(3) There was another gentleman who was a villager and did not know anything of modern education. When questions were asked he would fix gaze a little and would look very much absent-minded and immediately give replies as if he had seen them vividly. The questions need not be clear at all but to those vague questions he would give concrete replies which would tally exactly with the details of the questions which were in our mind.

I hope that you may be able to shed some light on these phenomena.

Answers

Such phenomena are not very unusual with Yogins and Bhaktas who are living a life of spiritual Sadhana and Yoga. These have been witnessed by different

people in almost all countries at various times, past as well as present. But they are not common among all such people, if you mean by that term (common) the general majority of persons engaged in spiritual life.

They are occult phenomena and they have not much to do with real spiritual illumination and Realisation. The presence of such phenomena does not necessarily indicate that the persons concerned possess spiritual Realisation. But, of course, it is quite possible that such occult phenomena may accompany inward Realization as well. There is nothing to prevent a spiritually illumined being possessing or even demonstrating such mysterious or 'miraculous' things. However, most spiritual persons choose not to manifest these occult processes, for definite reasons of their own.

(1) From what I have stated above just, now you may be able to draw your own conclusions regarding the Sannyasini and her friend. It is quite possible that this old Swamiji might have practised Yoga in the previous Janma and thus born with her inherent psychic faculties awakened and active since childhood. Spirit communication is not spiritual Realisation. Thought-forms issuing from the higher astral plane can be highly philosophical and subtle. Of course, replies and instructions given by means of such occult phenomenon are not, all of them, absolutely useless. There may be much in them that is useful to people in general and to seekers as well.

Sometime such utterances do issue from the trance-person's own sub-conscious depths, wherein this knowledge, previously acquired, lies embedded as hidden Samskaras.

(2) The phenomenon recently witnessed by you in Bombay is just thought-transference or thought reading. It is simple Telepathy. This is common.

(3) From the brief reference made in the case of the village gentleman, it seems to me to be something in the nature of either Mantra Siddhi or successful Upasana of some Devata. In South India, particularly in the West Coast region, cases of such Upasana and Siddhi have been frequently noted. In the particular case, the venerable person is either a person of some spiritual attainment or one who has acquired this occult Siddhi as a result of some peculiar Upasana or Mantra Siddhi. In such cases the replies are usually prompted by the Upasya-devata. Sometimes the Devata speaks through the person. Here however, such communication does not require a trance-condition of the person. It occurs even when the person is in normal condition. Just a little concentration may be done (as noted by) to invoke the reply. Perhaps the person might request for perfect silence on the part of those near about him. That is all.

There is a vast range of multiple-varied stages and stages of experience in between the gross, body-bound, ignorance-ridden worldly man and the fully illumined, perfected sage of transcendental know-

ledge. Not a few of these intervening states tend to draw away the unknowing seeker from his quest. Knowing them to be what they are, reverencing all, the humble seeker extremely vigilant and intent upon his quest should ceaselessly endeavour to reach the Truth.

58. SAMYAMA LEADS TO OCCULT POWERS

The three (Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi) together constitute Samyam.

The three are more internal than Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama and Pratyahara.

Even that (Samyam) is external to the seedless Samadhi.

By the conquest of Samyam comes the stage of cognition.

By Samyam on the sun comes the knowledge of the worlds.

By Samyam on the moon comes the knowledge of the regions of stars.

By Samyam on the Pole star, comes the knowledge of the movements of the stars.

By Samyam on the strength of elephants and others, comes their strength.

By Samyam on the form of the body; the power of comprehension being checked, and the connection between the eye and light being severed, comes the disappearance of the body.

By Samyam on the signs (of others) comes the knowledge of their minds.

By Samyam on a small point of time comes the discriminative knowledge.

By Samyam on the relation of the ear and ether, comes the divine hearing.

By Samyam on the relation between ether and

body, to the Yogi attaining the lightness of cotton, comes the power of the passage through ether (air).

By Samyam on the three modifications of mind, comes the knowledge of the past and future.

By Samyam and direct perception of the Samskaras (impressions of mind) comes the knowledge of the previous birth.

By Samyam on the power of cognition the essential own nature, egoism, qualities, and purposefulness or condition of senses, comes the mastery over senses (organs).

Then comes to the body the power of quick movement like the mind and perception with the Indriyas (senses) and mastery over nature.

By acquiring mastery over Udana Vayu, the Yogi will not have any contact with water, mud, thorns and others, and can die at will.

By mastery over Samana Vayu, comes effulgence.

By Samyam on friendliness and other virtues comes the power to transmit same to others.

By Samyam on the distinctive relation between Sattwa (Purity) and Purusha (the Soul) comes the powers of omnipotence and omniscience.

By Samyam on (the distinctions of) the word, meaning and knowledge which are confused with one another and appear as one because of similarity, comes the knowledge of the sounds of all living beings.

Karma (works) is of two kinds viz., those that are to be fructified and those that will bring fruits slowly (at a later date).

By Samyam over these or by portents, the Yogi gets the knowledge of (the time of) his death.

By Samyam on the Chakra (plexus) of navel, comes the knowledge of the body.

By Samyam on (the Chakra) at the pit of the throat, comes the removal of hunger and thirst.

By Samyam on the light of the head, comes the Darshan of Siddhas.

By Samyam on the heart, comes the knowledge of the mind.

By Samyam on the Kurma Nadi, comes the steadiness of the body.

By Samyam on the inner light (of the heart) comes the knowledge of the subtle, the obscured and the remote.

Exprience comes from the absence of discrimination between Sattwa and Purusha that are absolutely distinct from each other. This (enjoyment) being for another (Purusha) knowledge of Purusha comes by Samyam on himself.

From that (Samyam) arises the knowledge of clairaudience, higher taste and higher smell through intuition.

By the power of intuition comes the knowledge of all knowledge.

The mind (of a Yogi) enters another body by relaxation of the cause of bondage and by the knowledge of the method of passing.

By Samyam on the gross form, substantive nature, subtle form, qualities and usefulness of the elements comes mastery over the elements.

From that comes the attainment of the (eight major) Siddhis, Anima, etc., and the perfection of body and non-obstruction of their functions.

The perfection of body is (when it has) beauty, gracefulness, strength and adamant hardness.

These Siddhis are obstacles in attaining Samadhi; but they are for out-going mind.

By giving up even these (Siddhis) comes the destruction of the seed of bondage which brings Kaivalya (independence).

The Yogi should give up attachment and smile or happiness when the celestial beings invite, as there is again the possibilities of contacting with undesirables.

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
ASTOR LENOX TILDEN FOUNDATION
1215 6TH AVENUE
NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
ASTOR LENOX TILDEN FOUNDATION
1215 6TH AVENUE
NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
ASTOR LENOX TILDEN FOUNDATION
1215 6TH AVENUE
NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
ASTOR LENOX TILDEN FOUNDATION
1215 6TH AVENUE
NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
ASTOR LENOX TILDEN FOUNDATION
1215 6TH AVENUE
NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

CHAPTER VIII
SIGNS OF SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

CHAPTER VIII

STEPS OF SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

59. SONG OF SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

Cheerfulness, contentment, calmness,
Dispassion, detachment, fearlessness,
Equanimity, fixity, non-irritability,
Serenity, tranquillity, unperturbability;
Santi, Santosh, silence,
Peace, poise, perfection;
Nishtha, Bhav, Maha Bhav, Prem,
Horripilation, tears, tremor, Swara-bhanga;
Anahat sounds, lights, visions,
Ecstasy, rapture, joy;
Ritambhara, Madhumati, Prajna, Jyotis,
Inspiration, illumination, revelation,
Intoxication, insight, intuition;
These are the signs of Kundalini awakening,
These are the marks of spiritual progress.
These are the spiritual experiences.

60. MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF PROGRESS IN SADHANA

More and more dispassion and discrimination
More and more yearning for liberation
Peace, cheerfulness, contentment
Fearlessness, unruffled state of mind
Lustre in the eyes, good smell from the body
Beautiful complexion, sweet, powerful voice
Passing of little urine and excretion
Wonderful health, vim, vigour and vitality
Freedom from disease, laziness and depression.
Lightness of body, alertness of mind
Powerful Jatharagni or digestive fire
Eagerness to sit and meditate for long time
Aversion to worldly talks and company of worldlings
Feeling of presence of God everywhere
Love for all creatures
Feeling that all forms are of the Lord
That the world is Lord Himself
Absence of Ghrina or dislike to any creature
Even to those who despise and insult you
Strength of mind to bear insult and injury
To meet dangers and calamities
Are some of the preliminary spiritual experiences
These indicate that you are steadily advancing
In the spiritual path.
You will have a healthy body and mind.
The excretions will be scanty.
The voice will be sweet.

The face will be brilliant.

The eyes will be lustrous.

You will be ever calm, tranquil, and poised.

You will be ever cheerful, fearless and contented.

You will be dispassionate and discriminative.

There will be no attraction for the world.

Things that were used to upset you before

Will not upset you now.

You will have Antarmukha Vritti, introversion.

You will have an unruffled mind.

Things that were used to give you pleasure

Produce disgust or a reverse effect now.

You will have a one-pointed, sharp, subtle mind

You will be longing to have more meditation.

You will experience lights, visions, Divya Gandha,

Divya taste.

The idea that all forms are forms of the Lord

Will get stronger and stronger in you.

You will feel everywhere the presence of God.

You will experience the nearness of God.

You will have a very steady Asan.

You will develop a burning desire for selfless service.

61. OTHER IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS

I

Peace, cheerfulness, contentment, dispassion, fearlessness, unperturbed state of mind under all conditions indicate that you are advancing in the spiritual path.

Spiritual progress is not measured by Siddhis or powers, but only by the depth of your bliss in meditation.

These are the sure tests of your spiritual progress.

Is your interest in inner spiritual activity and outer Sadhana increasing day after day ?

Does spiritual life mean to your consciousness a matter of great delight, a delight for transcending the happiness that the world of vital pleasures affords you or offers you ?

Has your personal awareness come to a possession of a sense of peace and strength which men who are not aspirants do not find in their everyday lives ?

Do you feel certain that your power of discrimination and light of thought have been steadily growing ?

Is your life being gradually led to such experiences which reveal to you the operation of a will and intelligence other than your own, the will and intelligence of the Omnipresent Lord ?

Has there come into the conscious activities of your everyday life, the active function of a new delightful angle of vision, a new perceptive, a strong sense of self-possession, steadily growing conviction of your dependence upon and intimate relation with the all-pervading Divinity? If your answers to all these questions or to any one of them are in the affirmative, be absolutely sure that you are progressing, and progressing speedily in the spiritual path.

More and more dispassion and discrimination, more and more yearning for liberation, peace, cheerfulness, contentment, fearlessness, unruffled state of mind indicate that you are steadily advancing in the spiritual path.

Spiritual progress is indicated by lustre in the eyes, good smell from the body, beautiful complexion, sweet, powerful voice, passing of little urine and excretion, wonderful health, vim, vigour and vitality, freedom from disease, laziness, and depression, lightness of body, alertness of mind, powerful digestive fire, eagerness to sit and meditate for a long time.

There will be aversion for worldly company. There will be love for all beings, feeling that all forms are of the Lord. There will be absence of dislike for any creature, even to those who despise and insult.

There will be strength of mind to meet dangers and calamities, to bear insult and injury.

62. SIGNS OF PROGRESS IN THE PATH OF MEDITATION

Brahman, Self, Purusha, Chaitanya, Consciousness, God, Atma, Immortality, Freedom, Perfection, Peace, Bliss, Bhuma or the unconditioned, are synonymous terms. If you attain Self-realisation alone, you will be freed from the round of births and deaths and its concomitant evils. The goal of life is the attainment of final beatitude or Moksha. Moksha can be attained by constant meditation with a heart that is rendered pure and steady by selfless service, Japa, etc.

Meditation is the only real royal road to the attainment of salvation. Meditation kills all pains, sufferings and sorrows. Meditation destroys all causes of sorrow. Meditation gives vision of unity. Meditation induces sense of oneness. Meditation is a balloon or a parachute or an aeroplane that helps the aspirant to soar high into the realms of eternal bliss, everlasting peace, and undying joy.

Reality or Brahman can be realised by man. Many have attained Self-realisation. Many have enjoyed the Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Sankara, Dattatreya, Mansoor, Shams Tabriez, Jesus, Buddha were all realised souls who had direct perception of the Truth or Cosmic vision or Aparokshaanubhuti. But one who has known cannot communicate it to others for want of means. Even the knowledge acquired by the

five senses which are common to all cannot be communicated to others. You cannot tell the taste of sugar-candy to a man who has never tasted it. You cannot communicate the idea of colour to one born blind. All that the teacher can do is to tell his disciple the method of knowing the truth or the path that leads to the unfoldment of intuitional faculty.

These are the signs that indicate that you are growing in meditation and approaching God. You will have no attraction for the world. The sensual objects will no longer tempt you. You will become desireless, fearless, 'I'-less and 'mine'-less. Deha-adhyasa or attachment to the body will gradually dwindle. You will not entertain the ideas, "She is my wife; he is my son; this is my house." You will feel that all are manifestations of the Lord. You will behold God in every object.

The body and mind will become light. You will always be cheerful and happy. The name of the Lord will always be on your lips. The mind will be ever fixed at the lotus-feet of the Lord. The mind will be ever producing the image of the Lord. It will be ever seeing the picture of the Lord. You will actually feel that Sattwa or purity, light, bliss, knowledge and Prem are ever flowing from the Lord to you and filling up your heart.

You will have no body-consciousness. Even if there be body-consciousness, it will be in the form of a Samskara or a mental retention. A drunkard may not have full consciousness that he has a cloth

round his body. He may feel that something is loosely hanging from his body. Even so, you will have a feeling of the body. You will feel that something is sticking to you like a loose cloth or loose shoes.

You will have no attraction for the sex. You will have no sex-idea. Women will appear to you as manifestations of the Lord. Money and gold will appear to you as pieces of stone. You will have intense love for all creatures. You will be absolutely free from lust, greed, anger, jealousy, pride, delusion, etc. You will have peace of mind even when people insult you, beat you and persecute you. The reason why you are not perturbed is that you get immense spiritual strength from the Indweller or the Lord. Pain or pleasure, success or failure, honour or dishonour, respect or disrespect, gain or loss, are alike for you.

Even in dreams, you are in communion with the Lord. You will not behold any worldly pictures.

You will converse with the Lord in the beginning. You will see Him in physical form. When your consciousness becomes cosmic, conversation will stop. You will enjoy the language of the silence or the language of the heart. From Vaikhari (vocal speech) you will pass on to Madhyama, Pasyanti and Para (subtle forms of sounds) and eventually you will rest in soundless Omkara or soundless Brahman.

Dispassion, discrimination, serenity, self-restraint, one-pointedness of mind, Ahimsa, Satyam,

purity, forbearance, fortitude, patience, forgiveness, absence of anger, spirit of service, sacrifice, love for all, will be your habitual qualities. You will be a cosmic friend and benefactor.

During meditation you will have no idea of time. You will not hear any sounds. You will have no idea of the environments. You will forget your name and all sorts of relationship with others. You will enjoy perfect peace and bliss. Gradually you will rest in Samadhi.

Samadhi is an indescribable state. It is beyond the reach of mind and speech. In Samadhi or the superconscious state the meditator loses his individuality and becomes identical with the Supreme Self. He becomes an embodiment of bliss, peace and knowledge. So much only can be said. You have to experience this yourself through constant meditation.

Contentment, unruffled state of mind, cheerfulness, patience, decrease in the excretions, sweet voice, eagerness and steadiness in the practice of meditation, disgust for worldly prosperity or success and company, desire to remain alone in a quiet room or in seclusion, desire for association with Sadhus and Sannyasins, Ekagrata or one-pointedness of mind are some of the signs which indicate that you are growing in purity, that you are progressing in the spiritual path.

You will hear various kinds of Anahat sound of a bell, a kettle-drum, thunder, conch, Veena or flute,

the humming of a bee, etc., during meditation. The mind can be fixed in any of these sounds. This also will lead to Samadhi. You will behold various kinds of colours and lights during meditation. This is not the goal. You will have to merge the mind in that which is the source for these lights and colours.

A student in the path of Vedanta ignores these sounds and lights. He meditates on the significance of the Mantra of the Upanishad by negating all forms. "The sun does not shine there, nor do the moon and the stars, nor does this lightning shine and much less this fire. When He shines everything shines after Him by His light all these shine." He meditates also like this: "The air does not blow there. The fire does not burn there. There is neither sound nor touch, neither smell nor colour, neither mind nor Prana in that homogeneous essence", "Asabda, Asparsa, Arupa, Agandha, Aprana, Amana, Ateendriya, Adrishya—Chidanandaroopa Sivoham, Sivoham. I am blissful Siva, I am blissful Siva."

63. AN ANECDOTE ON SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

Sri Thakur Singhji, I.C.S., Commissioner of the Kumaon Division, accompanied by the District Magistrates of six Districts of the U.P. including Tehri-Garhwal, Dehra Dun, Lansdowne and Nainital, has come on a brief visit. On arrival all the officers and their families were entertained to tea. Some of them expressed their desire to visit the Gita Bhavan and Paramartha Niketan; but the Commissioner alone preferred to enjoy Sri Swamiji's company.

"I came here specially to meet you and talk to you, Swamiji, on the various spiritual problems I have," said Sri Thakur Singhji, "and that is why I have declined to go with them." Then he had a long conversation with Swamiji on various spiritual matters like spiritual experiences, man's foremost duty, etc., the gist of which is given below :

"In all matters with which it is connected, Swamiji, science gives us a precise account of how particular thing is constructed and how it grows : we are also given the successive signs that mark the growth. Are there in the practice of Yoga, Swamiji, any definite indications to measure the aspirant's progress—some experiences, for instance, he would have after, say, three months of practice, others which he would experience after a year and so on ?" asked Sri Thakur Singhji.

"Various Yogas give various experiences," replied Swamiji. "The practice of Pranayama and Hatha Yogic Kriyas, for instance, would give a graded series of psychic experiences. Seeing all kinds of ethereal lights and hearing certain Anahata sounds belong to this category. Here the sages who have propounded these Yogas have given very definite stages of spiritual experience. As the Kundalini passes from Chakra to Chakra the Yogi has certain definite, verifiable, experiences. That is because each Chakra governs some particular Tattwa and its mastery, therefore, gives specific experiences.

"Similarly in Tantrik Sadhana also, they have been able to give a definite chart of spiritual experiences. Each Sadhana has its own particular Siddhi: and, therefore, the experiences of all Sadhakas following that particular Sadhana are invariably the same.

"But these are all lower experiences of an inferior type. They are psychic experiences which need not necessarily denote the aspirant's spiritual progress. Even the Bhakta's experiences of horripilation, shedding of tears, etc., though they are not so perfectly graded as those of the Hatha Yogic experiences, do not necessarily indicate spiritual progress.

"When you enter the domain of the Spirit, you come into the sphere of the Infinite. Infinite are the Yogas and infinite are the experiences, too. Each man's Yoga is his own. For he has brought his own Samskaras and Vasanas: and he strives in

his own way to reach the Goal. These two interacting on each other give him various experiences. For instance, as he approaches the transcendental, infinite, immortal Self, the aspirant would enjoy great inner peace and indescribable happiness. He is not easily affected by what goes on around him. Not only this: he is able to radiate peace and happiness to all those who come into contact with him. He becomes GOOD and radiates goodness. This is the most important sign of spiritual progress. God is Perfect Goodness. The aspirant who progresses towards the realisation of God, therefore, grows in goodness. His evil qualities slowly vanish and are replaced by sublime virtues. If this most essential element is not there, then all other visions and sounds are practically useless. By his mere presence the advanced Yogi is able to inspire people to lead a good life, free from hatred and malice. His heart is filled with cosmic love and, therefore, he serves all spontaneously and selflessly. These are all real signs of spiritual progress.

"But, beyond all these is the ultimate experience. That is indescribable. Peace and happiness, undisturbed tranquillity of mind—these are all great signs of progress: but they do not constitute the Goal. The Goal is to become God. You must become one with God. This is achieved through ceaseless practice of meditation, after establishing oneself in Virtue and Goodness. That supreme experience when the Yogi feels he is one with God, no words can describe."

Sri Thakur Singhji described some instances which proved that he had a natural power of intuition. Swamiji said "That is good. It shows you had practised Yoga in your previous birth and achieved very good progress."

CHAPTER IX
EXPERIENCES OF THE JNANA YOGI

CHAPTER IX

EXPERIENCES OF THE JIVANA YOGI

64. PHASES OF EXPERIENCE IN JNANA YOGA

The student of Jnana Yoga destroys all thoughts of objects. He annihilates darkness through his discrimination. Then a radiant light appears before him.

He experiences dizziness.

Then he comes across void—Akasa.

Then Moha (delusion) manifests. The Jnana Yogi dispels this Moha through enquiry or Vichara.

Passing thus through the stages of darkness, light, sleep and Moha, the sage at last reaches the stage of Nirvikalpa Samadhi. He now enjoys Absolute Quiescence. He attains real Jnana. He becomes the ocean of eternal Jnana and the all-pervading Absolute Consciousness.

He is drowned in an ocean of nectar. He enjoys the eternal bliss, where the seer alone exists without the visible objects.

His mind becomes of the nature of Jnana. It becomes Chit-Consciousness itself. Being divested of all visions of objects, it contains Consciousness proper, like an ocean in an ordinary equilibrated stage without the disturbance of waves.

The sage freed from all attraction towards objects, becomes of the nature of wisdom pervading everywhere. He reaches that Jnana state which is above all and in which nothing but Truth exists and becomes the ocean of eternal Jnana and the all-pervading Absolute Consciousness.

The Hamsa sports itself in the permanent pool of spiritual bliss. The sage enjoys himself in his own Atma or Self.

65. FOUR TYPES OF JNANINS

There are four types of Jnanins viz., Brahma Vid,-Varah, -Vareeyan, and -Varishtha, according to the degree of Sattwic ego present in the Jeevanmukta.

Brahmavid, Brahmavid-Vara, Brahmavid - Vareeyan and Brahmavid-Varishtha are the four types of Jnanins. Brahmavid is one who is in the fourth Bhumika (Sattwapatti), Brahmavid-Vara is in the fifth Bhumika (Asam Sakti), Brahmavid-Vareeyan is in the sixth Bhumika (Padartha Bhavan), Brahmavid-Varishtha is in the seventh Bhumika (Tureeya). Brahmavid-Varishtha is always absorbed in Samadhi. He has to be fed forcibly. He is a Videhamukta. He will not be able to do any activity for Loka Sangraha (well-being of the world). Jada Bharata, late Mouni Swami of Kumbakonam, late Akalkot Swami (Maharashtra) were all Brahma-varishthas. They had no body-consciousness. A Vid or a Vara has very slight consciousness of the body in the form of a mental retentum or Samskara. A Vid and a Vara can work in the world. Some people imitate the state of an Avadhoota and throw away the clothes. A real Avadhoota is absolutely nude. As he is always established in Brahman he forgets the body and surroundings and the cloth drops by itself just as the cloth drops in the case of a drunkard. One must be careful in judging.

66. SEVEN STAGES OF JNANA

The seven stages of Jnana are Subhechcha, Vicharana, Tanumanasi, Sattvapatti, Asamsakti, Padarthabhavana, Tureeya.

(1) Subhechcha: When one feels that he is in ignorance and sincerely wishes to acquire spiritual knowledge he is in subhechcha.

(2) Vicharana: When one is convinced of the worthlessness of the world, and deeply ponders over the method of destroying ignorance and attaining spiritual knowledge, he is said to be in Vicharana.

(3) Tanumanasi: When the mind becomes thin like a thread due to distaste for objects of the world and is intensely engrossed in the contemplation of the Soul, he is in Tanumanasi.

(4) Sattvapatti: When the mind becomes pure (Sattvika) and is established in the Self due to prolonged contemplation, he is said to be in Sattvapatti.

(5) Asamsakti: When one becomes completely detached from the objective world due to the knowledge of the Self, he is in Asamsakti.

Paparthabhavana: When one realises that things of the world are not really material things but only the One Brahman, he is said to be in Padarthabhavana.

(7) Tureeya: When one completely negates the manifold distinctions of the world and realises the

Undivided (Akhandā) One Essence (Ekarasa), Satchidananda (Existence-knowledge-Bliss) he is said to be in Tureeya. This state of Tureeya is called the state of Jeevanmukti or liberation, while-in-life.

The keen desire which rises in one to get Moksha or enjoy the Bliss of the Self through Vairagya or indifference to sensual enjoyments, study of Atma-Jnana Shastras and associations with the knowers of Brahman is Subhechcha or the first state. The aspirant who is endowed with the four means of salvation, hears the Srutis and the significance of "Tat Twam Asi" Mahavakya at the feet of a Guru, and then reflects deeply on what he has heard. This is Vicharana or the second state. By practice of the two stages the mind is concentrated on Brahman at his will. The mind is rendered then like a thread. Brahmakara Vritti is generated. This is the third stage called Tanumanasi. All desires are eradicated now by the practice of the above three processes. Tattwa Jnana is developed. The mind is filled with purity or Sattwa. This is the fourth Bhumi called Sattwapatti. The mind melts in Brahman gradually. In the fifth stage or Asam Shakti he has no connection with the objects and their Samskaras and Sankalpas. Then comes the sixth stage, Padārtha Bhavana. All perceptions of objects external and internal are lost (Abhava Prateeti) The Jnani, if at all he has any perception of objects, has it only through sheer compulsion of others. The seventh stage is Tureeya. The Jnani is drowned in the Atmic Bliss. He has completely got rid of all conceptions of

heterogeneity. There is no Triputi now either external or internal.

One who functions in the first three Bhumikas is called a Mumukshu. One who functions in the fourth Bhumika is called a Brahmaavid. One who functions in the fifth Bhumika is called a Brahmaavid-vara. One who functions in the sixth Bhumika is called a Brahmaavidvareeyan. One who functions in the seventh Bhumika is called a Brahmaavidvarishtha.

Vama Deva, Jada Bharata, Akalkot Swami (Maharashtra), late Kumbakonam Mowni Swami are all Brahmaavidvareeyan and Brahmaavidvarishtha. They were perfect Avadhootas. Food had to be thrust inside by force. They were absolutely unconscious of the body and surroundings. They could not work for the Lokasangraha (for the well-being) of the world as Sree Sankara did. A Jnani of the fourth and fifth Bhumikas only can work in the world. Sree Sankara, Raja Janaka come under this class. A Jnani from the sixth and seventh Bhumikas will have to come down to fourth and fifth Bhumikas if he desires to uplift the world.

A Jnani of absolute seventh Bhumika who has not even a bit of body-consciousness cannot live for more than 14 days (from 2 or 3 to 14 days). The body will drop down within these 14 days. Western psychologists put down as seven days.

One School of thought says that knowledge of Brahman dawns in the fourth Bhumika. Another school of thought says that the real highest know-

ledge of Brahman can be had only in the seventh Bhumika and the fourth, fifth and sixth are stages only. According to the degree of annihilation of Vasanas these different stages are termed different names.

In Tureeya there is double consciousness. The Jnani identifies himself with the Brahman but he is conscious of his Sakshi state also for Jagrat, Swapna and Sushupti Avasthas. In Tureeyateeta, the Sakshi Bhava vanishes. The Jnani is enthroned in pure Nirvikalpa. There is Absolute Abhava of the world, external and internal and everything.

Some term Tureeyateeta people as Videhamuktas. Some say that Videhamukti can be had only when the Jnani throws off his physical body. It is not correct. Videhamukti can be had while one is alive. Janaka was called a Videha (one without a body). Vama Deva, Jada Bharatha and Dattatreya were all Videhamuktas, while they were living. In Videhamukti the Jnani is unconscious of his body. Hence it is termed Videhamukti.

Ishwar also has double consciousness. Only during Cosmic Pralaya. He has pure Nirvikalpa consciousness. To pass on into the seventh Bhumika the Jnani has to give up his Lokasangraha activities of all sorts.

People who do a little of Tapas, and have Vairagya, Titiksha and control of the physical body and its movements (Kashtha Mowna) aken for mist are Sapta-Bhumika Jnani (a sage of the seventh)

stage. Jnani of the seventh Bhumika is very very rare. The above Tapasvin may show the external signs of a Jnani. It is simply an induced mechanical state through change of habits. He may have established new habits. He may sit in one place. He may not look at anybody. He may have a steady fixed gaze by the practice of Tratak. He may not show any perference for food. He may roll on hot sand. He may lie down on ice. These are all physical Titiksha practices only. They have nothing to do with Jnana. Jnana is pure internal, Anubhava, state. The Tapasvin with Titiksha may not have an internal Brahmavichara state. You will have to be very, very careful in your judgement.

You must be a pure man. You must live with a Jnani for a long time. You must be in his company constantly. You must know his antecedence in detail, his previous life and conduct, his Shastric studies, his life of Tapas, his Guru, etc. Then only you can draw a safe and right conclusion. A Shakespeare can know a Shakespeare. A Jnani only can know a Jnani. This testing business of a Jnani is a very difficult one.

67. DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS OF A JEEVANMUKTA

The Jeevanmukta is a liberated sage. He is freed from the trammels of birth and death. He is emancipated while living. He has cut off all bonds of egoism, lust, anger, greed, selfishness, pride, likes, dislikes, exhilaration and depression. He has supreme knowledge of Brahman. He is free from all doubts. He has nothing more to be known or attained.

The Jeevanmukta has double consciousness. He may be absorbed in Samadhi or he may work like an ordinary man for the good of the world. Internally he has the Bhava or mental attitude, "I am a witness (Sakshi), I am non-doer (Akarta) I am non-enjoyer (Abhokta)," and thus he may be engaged for Lokasangraha or for implementing the cosmic will, as a detached agent. The world appears to him, like a mirage. He enjoys the sense-objects offered by others like a child. They do not taint him for his consciousness is rooted in Brahman. He beholds this world like one seen in dream.

The Jeevanmukta is like the man who is sitting on the wall. On one side is the conditioned existence in the awareness of the world. On the other side is the unconditioned awareness-whole which is found only in the state of Self-realisation. A man sitting on one side of the world cannot see what is there

on the other side. A worldly man cannot have the knowledge of Brahman. Likewise, a Videhamukta, whose individuality is absolutely merged in Brahman, cannot have the awareness of the world, which is non-existent to him. If his body is to be maintained it has to be fed and cared for by others. The Videhamukta is thus not in a position to engage himself for the good of the world.

The double-consciousness of the Jeevanmukta places him in a unique position like the man on the wall to be aware of both the spheres of consciousness. His realisation of Brahman is irrevocable. He cannot be shaken from his supreme consciousness. Yet for the good of humanity he engages a part of his consciousness to function in the worldly sphere. Lord Krishna is an ideal example who possessed double consciousness.

68. SAMADHI JNANI AND VYAVAHARA JNANI

A Jnani is one who has knowledge of unity of Self. He who has Vyavaharaapeksha (desire for Vyavahara, worldly activities) and works in the world is a Vyavahara-Jnani. This desire for works is due to his Prarabdha. He uses his body and mind as his instruments just as a carpenter uses his tools. He has also Triputi but sees the whole world within himself. He sees nothing outside, just as you do. He sees through His Divya Drishti or Jnana Chakshu, and not through the physical eyes. It is very difficult for a worldly man with practical Buddhi to mentally visualise how a Jnani sees the physical universe while he is working. The impression produced in the water with a stick is not so deep and lasting as an impression made with the same stick in loose earth. Similar is the case with these two types of Jnanins. In Vyavahara Jnani, the impression of Nirvikalpa Samadhi or Brahmakara Vritti Sthiti is not so lasting, deep and continuous as that of a Samadhi Jnani. In the former it is like that of an impression in water. In the latter it is like that of an impression in the earth. It is deep and continuous like Tailadhara (steady flow of oil).

A Vyavahara Jnani knows that this is Vishtha (faecal matter); this a Chandana (sandal paste); this is a fool, this is an intelligent man, this is an Adhikari, this is an Anadhikari, this success, this is failure, this is a rogue, this is an honest man. But he is not affected in his feelings. He is neither exalted when he gets success nor depressed when he fails. He neither

loves an honest man nor hates the rogue. In this sense, he has Sama Drishti (equal vision).

A Vyavahara Jnani will experience pain when his finger is cut, but a Samadhi Jnani will not experience pain even a bit even when his leg is amputated. The case of Shams Tabriez of Mooltan of late would serve as an example to justify the truth of the above statement. When he was skinned out, he laughed and uttered "Analhaq, Analhaq" (Analhaq means "I am He" and corresponds to Hindu 'Soham')

A Vyavahara Jnani sees names and forms but a Samadhi Jnani withdraws himself from the universe and does not see names and forms at all.

Knowledge is the same in these two types of Jnanins. But the Samadhi Jnani enjoys more Ananda than the Vyavahara Jnani.

Samadhi Jnani is one who is ever absorbed in Brahman. He does not see names and forms. The world has entirely vanished for him. He is quite unable to work. He is a Muzub. He is a Paramahansa. Late Akalkot Swami of Maharashtra, late Kumbakonam Mowni Swami (who remained for 25 years in an Adwaita Samadhi state) Jada Bharata, Sree Dattatreya were all Samadhi Jnanins. They all belonged to sixth (Padartha-bhavana) and seventh (Tureeya) Jnana Bhumikas. Late Akalkot Swami and Mowni Swami of Kumbakonam were unconscious of the movement of the bowels and the Sevakas (attendants) had to wash their bottoms. Janaka and Sree Sankara were Vyavahara Jnanins. Those who are in the fourth (Sattwapatti) and

the fifth (Asam Sakti) Jnana Bhumikas (stages of Jnana) only can work.

The description given of a Jnani in Bhagavad Gita and various other books is quite inadequate, incomplete and imperfect. His state can never be described by the finite speech. His state can never be imagined by the limited mind. He shines in his own pristine glory.

When you put a drop of blood under the microscope and examine it carefully, you are struck with wonder. You see millions of red blood corpuscles, white cells, leucocytes, lymphocytes, nuclei, pigments, etc.

Similarly, a Jnani with the help of the powerful lens, eye of Atman (Divya Chakshu) sees the whole world with all details of creations. He sees the astral body, causal body with its Samskaras, the Pranic aura, psychic aura, magnetic aura, etc., of a man. Food has to be thrust forcibly in the case of Samadhi Jnani. Samadhi Jnani is either a Brahma Vareeyan or a Brahma Varishtha. A Vyavahara Jnani is a Brahmavid and Brahmavara.

When you are in a closed room and when you look outside through a small hole in the door, your vision is very very limited. You can see a few trees, one or two men, a portion of sky, etc. But when you come out you can have a wide range of vision. Similarly, when you see with the physical eyes, the vision is very limited. A Jnani sees the whole world within himself (as part and parcel of his own Self) through the cosmic eye, through the eye of Atman.

69. THE SAGE'S EXPERIENCE

I am ever free. I alone am. I am taintless, spaceless, timeless. The world appears like a mirage within me.

I am infinite, imperishable, self-luminous, self-existent, self-contained. I know neither pleasure, nor pain, neither joy nor sorrow, neither happiness nor misery.

I am beginningless. I am endless. I am decayless. I am birthless. I am deathless.

Never was I born. I am ever free. I am perfect. I am pure. I am independent.

I am tranquil. I am Pure Knowledge, transcendent. I am above good and evil, virtue and vice.

I am one. I go nowhere. I come from nowhere. I abide in myself. I pervade the entire universe. I am all-permeating and interpenetrating.

I am Absolute. I am non-dual. I am pure Wisdom. I am pure Consciousness.

I am the limitless, infinite ocean of consciousness. The wind of mind produces the waves of worlds.

I am Atma, impersonal and all-pervading. I am Atma the Self of all beings. I am the Substratum, support, source for everything.

I am the nectar which is Knowledge Absolute. I am beyond the reach of the mind, the intellect and the senses.

I am unattached (Asanga). I am not the doer (Akarta). I am not the agent. I am not the enjoyer (Abhokta). I am the silent Witness (Sakshi).

Free from subject and object am I; Satchidananda Brahman am I.

The one, the taintless, transcendental Truth am I. Ever stable, peaceful, immovable, immutable. invulnerable, unperturbable Truth am I.

The nectar of Immortality am I. The immortality-giving knowledge am I. Ever-blissful Siva am I.

I am the taintless Nirvana. I am Tureeya, the fourth stage of consciousness. I am Be-ness.

I am Freedom Absolute. I am Supreme Peace Transcendental. I am Supreme Silence Stupendous.

There is neither space nor time in me. I am Infinity. I am Eternity.

First I abandoned desires. then attachment. Now I abide in Supreme Peace.

I do not mix much. I do not move. I meditate. Now I abide in eternal peace.

I controlled the senses and the mind. I cultivated dispassion. Now I abide in everlasting peace.

The world is an illusion. Brahman is the only Reality. Knowing this, now I abide in peace that passeth all understanding.

"I am all-pervading, immortal Atma" Knowing this, now I abide in peace immortal.

I have renounced both action and inaction. I live happily in any state now. So I abide in perennial peace.

The sense-objects are the robbers. I have annihilated these robbers. I am quite safe and happy. Now I abide in unalloyed peace.

The World is a Dream

How the Jnani Deduces the Unreality of the Universe

Both in waking and in dream, objects are "perceived" or "seen" as different from the subject. The character of "being seen" is common to both kinds of experience. There is subject-object relationship in waking as well as in dream. This is the similarity between the two. "Something is seen as an object" means "something is other than the Self." The experience of the not-self is illusory, for, if the not-self were real, the Self would be limited and unreal. The illusory experience of the not-self is common to both waking and dream. In waking, the mind experiences through the senses; in dream the mind alone experiences. In both the states, the mind alone experiences, whether externally or internally.

Dream is transcended by waking, waking by Tureeya. Hence, both dream and waking are contradicted. Waking contradicts dream, and dream contradicts waking. When the one is, the other is not. Neither of the two is continuously existent. This proves the unreality of both.

Duality is not real, because duality is the opposite of eternity. Without duality there is no perception. Hence, anything that is perceived is unreal whether in dream or in waking. Dream is

real when there is no waking. Waking is real when there is no dream. Hence, both are unreal experiences. They depend on one another for their existence. One cannot say whether he is dreaming or waking without referring one state to another. Desires are the rulers of all experiences in waking and also in dream. Waking is physical functioning of desires; dream is mental functioning of desires. The senses are moved by desires in waking; the mind is moved by desires in dreaming. Both these states are like flowing streams. They do not persist for ever in one state. That which persists for ever is real. Dream and waking have a beginning and an end. Change is the characteristic of all perceived objects. Change implies non-existence at the beginning and also at the end. That which does not exist at the beginning and does not exist at the end does not exist in the middle also. Therefore, waking is unreal like dream.

Reason for Unreality

It may be contended that waking is real, because it is the cause of dream, and dream is not the cause of waking. But this contention is without support. If waking is a cause, it must be real. If it is real, it must exist for ever. Waking itself is without reality, for it does not exist always. If the cause itself is unreal, how can it produce a real effect? Both these are unreal states. One who eats stomachful in waking state may feel hungry in the dream state and *vice versa*. Things appear to be real only in a particular condition. They are not

real always. That which is not always real is an appearance and so unreal.

The object is called an object just because there is a perceiving subject. Similarly, a subject is called a subject just because there is a perceived object. Neither of the two is self-existent. And, therefore, both prove themselves to be unreal. Subject and object appear in the form of cause and effect. Without an effect nothing can be a cause. The mind perceives and recognises objects only by relating one thing to another. There cannot be a lapse of time in which the cause remains unchanged. If the cause can exist unchanged for sometime, there is no reason why it should change at any time at all. Either there is continuous causation, or no causation at all. If causation is continuous, cause and effect become identical, being inseparable from one another. But the Jnani transcends the scheme of causation. Self-realisation breaks the chain of causation, and consequently the world of experience appears false.

70. MARKS OF A REALISED SAGE : AN ANECDOTE

A learned visitor had Darshan of Swamiji today in the office, when he expressed to Swamiji certain doubts which Swamiji readily cleared. He first said, "Swamiji, I want to know something about Nirvikalpa Samadhi. The scriptures say that a person who has attained Nirvikalpa Samadhi would not publicly say that he has attained it. Then, how are we to know that such and such a man has attained the highest wisdom or not?" Swamiji replied, "We can know it by observing his actions, behaviour, talk, equal vision, peace, bliss, perfect serenity, balanced mind under all conditions, cosmic love, and steady wisdom (Sthitaprajna)." "How can he himself know that he has attained Nirvikalpa Samadhi?" was the visitor's next question. Swamiji answered, 'If his experience tallies with the experience of the Seers of the Upanishads, if he enjoys absolute bliss and peace, if he maintains unperturbed serenity of mind under the worst situations, if his doubts have been rent asunder, if he beholds unity in diversity, if he feels that he is the Self in all beings and the whole world is his body, if he is perfectly free from desires for sensual objects, Raga, Dwesha, egoism, anger, lust, mineness, pride and attachment, he can be sure that he has attained Realisation."

A Videhamukta is a Tureeyateeta, one who has transcended Tureeya, the seventh Bhumika. He is

ever absorbed in Samadhi. He has to be fed by others. He cannot take food himself. Jada Bharata, late Mouni Swami of Kumbakonam, late Akalkot Swami (Maharashtra) were Videhamuktas. A Jeevanmukta is in the state of Sattwapatti (fourth Bhumika), Atam Sakti (fifth Bhumika) or Padartha Bhavana (sixth Bhumika). He has a slight consciousness of the body in the form of a mental-retention or Samskara. He can take food himself. He need not be fed. His consciousness of the body may be compared to the consciousness of body of a sleeping person. When some flies sit on his body, although he is sleeping, he will immediately drive them off, though he may not be conscious of them. Such is the Jeevanmukta's consciousness of the body. He attends to his bodily wants mechanically due to force of Prarabdha, and previous Samskaras. A Videhamukta will cast away his body in seven to twenty-one days after attaining that state.

•

CHAPTER X

STATE OF LIBERATION

CHAPTER X
STATE OF LIBERATION

71. A DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE STATE OF MOKSHA

Sadyo Mukti

All endeavours aim at the common Ideal of the perpetual abolition of sorrow and the experience of unending bliss. Bliss is only in the infinite and sorrow is only in the finite. There is no bliss in the finite and there is no sorrow in the Infinite. Therefore, the attainment of the Infinite Life is the supreme purpose of finite life. Knowledge and meditation have both their dear aim in the realisation of the Absolute. Moksha is the highest exaltation of the self in its pristine nature of supreme perfection. Emancipation is the Consciousness of the Reality; not becoming something which previously did not exist, not travelling to another world of greater joy. It is the knowledge of eternal existence, the awareness of the essential nature of Pure Being. It is the freedom attained by knowing that we are always free. Knowledge is not merely the cause for freedom, but is itself freedom. Moksha consists in Jnana (knowledge) and is not the effect or product of Jnana. Jnana is Existence itself, and hence, it cannot be a means to attain Jnana of Existence, which is Moksha, as a thing does not attain itself. Chit is the same as Sat. To be what is Moksha It is to realise one's Self, to be Oneself, is to be the All.

"There is no consciousness after the death (of

individuality)" said Yajnavalkya. Since Consciousness alone is the entirety of being, there is no consciousness of anything objective in the highest state. It is the Fullness of Perfect Existence. It is, but is not anything; it sees, but sees not anything; it hears, but hears not anything; it knows, but knows not anything. It does not go to where it was not, it does not get what it did not have. Even the expression "It knew only Itself" (Brih.Up.1.4.10) is an understatement of the Truth, for it implies self-consciousness which is the characteristic of Ishwara and not Brahman. Brahman does not know, for It is knowledge; It does not enjoy, for It is enjoyment; It is not "existent" but "existence." It is non-material, has no contact with any objective being. "It eats nothing, no one eats It." It is the supreme "incorporeal which pain and pleasure do not touch." The realisation of the Self is in a way like the shining of the sun when the clouds no more cover him. It is the regaining of originality in the absolute sense. It is "quenching the fire of death with the water of knowledge" (Brih. Up. III. 2.10). It is deathless impersonality of conscious nature, not merely living as an eternal person. A person, even the absolute person (Ishwara), is non-eternal. No actual change takes place in the realisation of the Truth, but it appears to be all change! "Though the Full may be taken out from the Full, the Full alone remains without change." Even the utter extinction of personality does not involve that least transformation in true existence. It is the simple knowing, the great knowing, so mysterious and compli-

cated, the ever-unsolved problem, the only problem of the whole universe. And, yet, it is the only Truth to the Knower. The curious riddle, somehow, makes one feel that, truly, nothing happens in Infinity, though worlds may seem to roll in It. That which is so simply said as "Existence-Consciousness" and which is so easy to understand, is, after all, the hardest nut to crack, never understood, never known, never realised by any individual, the supreme identity of the greatest positive Truth and the greatest negation in one. The Absolute is really supra-relative, supra-mental, supra-rational. Whatever is spoken or thought is not the Truth as It is. Truth is the union of the cosmic thinker and the cosmic thinking. There is no separate object of this thinking, nothing that is thought of here, for thinking itself is the object of thinking. thought thinks itself, all objects are mere processes of cosmic thinking, nothing real in themselves. Thought and its object, knowledge and the known, seeing and the seen, relation and the object related to, mind and the universe, are identical with the Universal Essence. The conscious transcending of the successive double relation in the cosmos of the thinker who is identical with the thinking, and of the thinking which is identical with that which is thought of is Liberation. The universe has no reality independent of its Universal Knower. The original delusion of the difference between the thinker and the thinking is greater than and is the cause of the secondary delusion of the difference between the thinking and the thought-of. There

is the thinking because there is the thinker ; there is the thought-of because there is the thinking. The thinking is the object of the thinker ; the thought-of is the object of the thinking. Egoism or duality-consciousness and the world or multiplicity consciousness are the respective effects of the mistake that the object is independent of and different from the subject in both these cases. Samsara is the knower-knowledge-known-relationship. But it must however be remembered here that the distinction between the thinker and the thinking and that between the thinking and the thought-of is not made in and is not valid to the Cosmic Consciousness of Ishwara. But this distinction is superimposed by the individual on Ishwara when it perceives as an individual knower, its own distinctness and the variety of world-manifestation. Relations are meaningful to the individual alone and not to the Universal Being. These distinctions are present even in the superhuman individuals, even in those who have reached Brahmaloaka or the subtlest possible state which is within the jurisdiction of individualistic consciousness. That which is above all distinctions and relations is Brahman, the knowledge of which is neither thinking nor sleeping. This is that which is asserted through endless, denials, impossible to describe, impossible to imagine, nothing, everything ! The only definition of the nature of the Reality is perhaps " That which is not anything, but not nothing, that which is everything, and knows nothing but Itself." That is Brahman ! Therefore, bondage and

liberation are only a matter of forgetfulness and awareness of fact respectively, and not a change in being. The complete transcendence of one's individuality is at once the realisation of the Absolute. The moment the Jiva is negated the cosmic play is explained and the cosmos and Ishwara sink into Brahman.

Moksha is neither a mass of consciousness nor self-consciousness. It is the very life and order of the universe, ever-present, unchanging. It transcends even the sense of immortality which also is conceptual. The Light of the Absolute puts a sudden end to all relative existence and the world does not exist even as a remembrance. There is no such thing as inert, inanimate, dead matter or blind force. It is all supreme Force, Knowledge and Bliss without motion or mind. There are no planes of existence, no states of consciousness, no degrees of reality. This is the most blessed and supreme state of absolute freedom and conscious eternal life, not a conviction but actual being. It is the awful grandeur of utter negation of limitation and experience of Infinitude, not mere continued personal life. It is the complete dissolution of thought in simple existence which is the mightiest nothing! It is an immediate here and now of spacelessness and timelessness, the inexpressible, beyond joy and sorrow, beyond knowledge and ignorance, beyond life and death, beyond all that is beyond! It is the fullest Reality, the completest Consciousness, the immensest Power, the intensest Bliss, Truth, knowledge, power, happiness

and immortality are Its shadows. Unseen, transcendent, uninferable, unthinkable, ununderstandable, indescribable, imperishable, the loftiest, the deepest, the Truth, the Great—That is the Absolute. The light of limitless number of suns is darkness in Its presence. It oversteps the boundaries of being and nullifies all ideas of existence. It is the Giant-Spirit which swallows up the mind and the ego and wipes off the individual consciousness to the very extreme. It is the Thunder that breaks the heart of the universe, the Lightning that fuses all sense of empirical reality. The bubble bursts into the ocean and the river enters the sea! The soul merges into the extremely Real.

The Grandeur of the Absolute is grander than all other grandeur. It is the crowning edifice of truth and glory.

Nothing is beyond That. It is neither form, nor content nor existent. The soul sinks into It by an experience of all-fullness, neither essence, nor kingdom, nor wisdom, neither equal, nor unequal, neither static nor moving, neither sitting nor resting, neither one nor two, neither true nor false, neither this-ness nor that-ness, nothing known to us, nothing known to any existent being. It has no name, there is no definition of It! It is That which is. It is not love, nor grace, nor world nor soul, nor God, nor freedom, nor light, for all these are relative conceptions. It is not Satchidananda which is only an ideal 'other' of what we here experience. Satchidananda is only the logical

highest, a mere intellectual prop. Reality is beyond Satchidananda also. It is itself, the eternal sun that shines in the infinite sky of the absolute world ! It transcends cosmic consciousness. It is the supra-essential essence. Eternity and Infinity embrace one another to form Its Centre of Experience. It is an Ocean that sweeps away the earth and the heaven and the netherland. Sun, moon and stars are dissolved in It. Brahma, Vishnu and Siva vanish into It. It is the Life of life, wisdom of Wisdom, Joy of joy, Power of power, Real of real, Essence of essence. Birthlessness and deathlessness float in It like ripples. It is the supreme Death of all, and yet, It is the highest peak of real life. The totality of all the joys of the whole universe is merely a distorted fragment of That Supreme. It puts an end to the vicious circle of transmigratory life.

The Upanishads have left no stone unturned and have spared no pain in attempting to give the best expression to the majestic Absolute-Experience :

"The knower of the Self crosses beyond sorrow,"

"He who knows that Supreme Brahman becomes Brahman Itself."

"The knower of Brahman attains the Highest."

"One who is established in Brahman reaches Immortality."

"He returns not again, he returns not again."

By knowing Him alone one goes to That which is beyond death. By knowing the Supreme Being, the wise one casts off both joy and sorrow. They who see Him, the Self-Existent.—they, and no

others, have eternal peace. Of him, whose desires are completely satisfied, who is totally perfected, all desires dissolve themselves here itself. The liberated one becomes onefold, threefold, fivefold, sevenfold, ninefold, elevenfold, hundred-and elevenfold, twenty-thousandfold! He goes to the other shore of darkness. That state is ever illumined, it is always day there. Time, age and death, sorrow, merit and demerit do not go there. Fearless is the state of the Bliss of Brahman. Even the gods fear him, even Indra and Prajapati cannot obstruct him. He becomes the Self-Emperor. The knot of the heart is broken, all doubts are rent asunder, and all actions perish, when That is seen, which is the Highest and the Deepest. His vital-spirits do not depart, they are gathered up here itself. Being Brahman already, he becomes Brahman Itself. He is the maker of everything he is the creator of all, the universe is his, he himself is the universe. This is the supreme treasure. The freed souls enter into the All, they enter into Brahman, they are liberated beyond mortal nature. The whole constitution of individuality becomes unified in the Supreme Imperishable. As rivers enter the ocean, leaving name and form, so the wise one, liberated from name and form, reaches the Transcendental Divine Being. This is Immortality.

This is Immediate Liberation (Sadyomukti), the instantaneous experience of the Absolute through the sudden destruction of the fabric of personality built by Avidya, Kama and Karma. Karma is the

child of Kama which is never fulfilled until its source, Avidya, is transcended through the realisation of Brahman which is unsurpassed perfection. How can, by knowing one thing, another thing be attained? The attainment and the knowledge here are the same, self-identical. The suprem Brahman is the All.

Sadyomukti is the processless immediate experience of Brahman, spaceless and timeless, on account of one's habituation to the Non-dual knowledge of the Self. It is given to a very few to realise Brahman in this way, for most of the aspirants cannot proceed with their meditations without some kind of objective content in their consciousness. The quick and sudden illumination, which Sadyomukti is, is a very unique experience, and it puts end to the relative notions of Ishwara, Jiva and Jāgat. In this, there is neither the experience of the degrees of phenomenon nor resting in the region of Ishwara or Brahmaloaka after being freed. It is at once being Brahman.

Krama Mukti

There are in the Upanishads intimations of Kramamukti or the progressive process of liberation of the soul. The soul reaches the Saguna Brahman or Parameshwara, who transcends even the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. This great Lord of the universe is also called "Uttama Puruṣa" or 'Puruṣhottama'. He is the Absolute-Individual, the Supreme Brahman manifested as the Cause of the origin, the sustenance and the dissolution of the

universe The Upanishads are emphatic in their Statements that one who reaches through knowledge; this Supreme Cause does not return to the mortal coil, but proceeds further to the Absolute Reality. The Mundaka Upanishad says that the sages in the world of Brahma are liberated beyond death in the end of time. Those who attain the world of the Saguna Brahman remain there until the end of the universe, enjoying the effects of their 'Satyakarmas' and 'Satyasankalpas', the fruits of their desires and willings based on Truth. Whatever they wish, it arises then and there instantaneously, for they are in harmony with the Universal Being. They enjoy the Highest approximation to the bliss of the Lord of the Universe. Their desires are not like those of the mortals in Samsara, for the latter's desires are flames of morbid passions based on untruth and arising out of intense selfishness and egoism set in opposition to the other individuals of the universe, whereas, the former's desires are absolute truth-willings which are attuned with the law of the God of the universe, in spite of the individualities maintained by them there. Practically the desire of the liberated soul is no desire at all in the general sense, for it is not the effect of Avidya (mixture of deluded passion and darkness) but of Maya (light of truth and knowledge). The desire of one liberated soul cannot be against that of another, for they all are co-existent with the One God; but, the desires of one man are mostly against those of others for they all are dissipated and cut off one from another

by the separative egos and rooted in blind darkness. The liberated souls think and work through the higher thought of spiritual nature, not through the mind and sense-organs of the lower nature. They breathe the universal life and exist as partakers of the joy of the Master of the Universe. They have the unceasing immediacy of the consciousness of everything, an awareness of the inmost objective essences of the complete universe. Their experiences are, no doubt, objective, they being not identical with the Absolute, but they can have an entire knowledge of the universe through self-identification with anything in the universe, though this is different from the simultaneous Cosmic Consciousness of God or Ishwara. But they are not opposed to the being of God; they work as God works, live as God lives, will as God wills, though all this happens spontaneously there. They are the sportive forms of the Absolute in Itself. They want nothing; they are satisfied with themselves. They do not crave for an entity second to themselves; they desire only themselves and even when they enjoy the objects of the universe they do so with an identity-consciousness of the two. They are like several circles with a common centre and radii of the same length, but comprehended within the Great Circle of the Infinite. The differences among these souls are not detrimental to the Infinite, since they are nearest to it. However, even truth-willings and enjoyments with consciousness of identity of things cannot be taken as the highest Liberation.

It is said that these souls enjoy all powers except those of universal creation, preservation and destruction which belong to God alone, and that conflict of actions may arise if all are endowed with the same power. This statement can be intelligible only when the relation between God and the liberated souls is not one of the identity but of difference. If Liberation means the highest knowledge of God, to live in the same world as God's, to live near to God, and to have a form similar to God's, and yet to be different from God, can only be lesser than liberation, because God is not one of many individuals, not a Samsari, but the only existing absolute individual, and to have any relation with Him is to know Him, and to know Him is to be one with Him and to be one with Him is not to perceive duality. The knowledge of God or Ishwara which these souls in Brahmaloaka on the path of Krama Mukti have is only an approximation to Ishwara-consciousness, but is not the same as that. Hence these souls are neither omnipotent nor omniscient, though they have full freedom as far as their enjoyments within their circles are concerned. There does not arise the question of the conflict that may arise among the liberated souls endowed with the power of creation, preservation and destruction if all souls are one with Ishwara. To be endowed with the same power and knowledge as God is to be non different beings forming a One Whole which is God. And, since no two individuals can have identical knowledge

without themselves destroying their different forms and becoming one being we are led to suppose a difference in experience among these souls. Further when it is said that the liberated souls attain Absolute Experience only at the end of the universe, it is implied that they cannot experience Absoluteness as long as Ishwara exists as a Self-conscious being, which means that they are still having an objective experience and are not identical with Ishwara. Otherwise there is no reason why they should retain their individualities until the end of the universe. The correct view, however, seems to be that all those who meditate upon the Absolute Individual (God) through positive qualitative conceptions rest in the Absolute Individual who, in the end of time, ending the space-time-universe which is His own Body, dissolves Himself in the conscious power of the Absolute, which is non-different from the Absolute. These relatively liberated ones have their individualities not destroyed here but exist in the world of the Absolute Individual i.e. the Absolute Individual is experienced by them not directly but as an objective conscious universe. This Self-Dissolution of God is, in some respects, similar to the deep sleep of the worldly individual who also, in the end of the day, ending his body-consciousness, dissolves himself in the unconscious power based on the Atma, which is superimposed on the Atma. But the difference between the two dissolutions, however, is in the fact that in the case of God, there is no further

forced coming back to universe-consciousness, no subsequent dreaming and waking state, and there is Absolute Experience, whereas, in the case of the worldly individual there is forced coming back to body-consciousness, there is subsequent dreaming and waking state, and there is no Self-experience. There is Kama and Karma in the individual because of Avidya, but in God there is Vidya, universal consciousness or absolute Self-Consciousness alone, and hence, there are no concomitant Kama and Karma which are the causes of objective multiplicity-consciousness and the activity therefor. Desire and action in the individual are the outcome of the darkness of ignorance, but they do not exist in Vidya which is the light of knowledge. The souls who are in the World of Ishwara or the Absolute Individual experience it as an Intelligence World of Shuddha Sattva corresponding to their own personalities made of the same substance. The soul is said to reach God through the passage of the sun (Mund UP. I 2 11) and, thus, pass on to the Absolute. Anywise, the imaginary problem of the possibility of the multiple lordship of the liberated souls does not arise, any more than the possibility of the existence of many Absolutes and Eternities. When there is individuality there is no omniscience or omnipotence, and when there are these there is no individuality. If we are to be alive to the sentences which declare that the liberated soul "goes round laughing, sporting, enjoying, with women and chariots and friends, not remembering the appendage of

the body" (Ch.Up.VIII 12 3.), we can be so only by convincing ourselves that this state cannot be that of the Consciousness of the Absolute, or that this may be the condition of the Jeevanmukta who does mysterious and ununderstanding actions, and who, though he has no consciousness of his body, is yet made to animate his body through a slight trace of the existent pure egoism unconnected with consciousness. This is, in other words the remainder of that part of his Prarabdha Karma which is obstructive to Knowledge. The state of Jeevanmukti has no connection with the physical body; it is a state of consciousness; so it can be experienced even when the physical body is dropped, i.e., even in Brahmalo-ka. The Jeevanmukta of this physical world, with his physical body, too is really in Brahmalo-ka in his consciousness, though the body is in this world. Those who have not attained Jeevanmukti here and are not ready for Sadyo Mukti immediately after the Prana stops functioning in the present physical body, attain this through Krama Mukti after the death of the physical body. This shows that a Videhamukta is not one who exists in Brahmalo-ka but who has merged in the Absolute. Or, we have to make a distinction between two kinds of Videhamuktas—those who have individualities either in a lower superhuman experience or in Brahmalo-ka and are on the verge of Absolute Experience on the exhaustion of their Prarabdha which is the cause of their super-human experience and their experience in Brahmalo-ka (the arising from which is called the

waking up of Brahma or Hiranyagarbha) and those who have actually merged in Brahman. In Brahmalo-
loka the soul is like a perfect Jeevanmukta of this
world and all its actions are spontaneous promptings
of the pure Prarabdha and not conscious willings
born of a deliberately egoistic personality. If we
are to be consistent with the demands of Jeevan-
mukti we have to hold that even the Satyakamas
and Satyasankalpas or desires and willings based on
Truth in the liberated soul of the Brahmalo-
ka are really not conscious actions but spontaneous
outpourings of the remaining momentum of actions
done previous to the rise of Self-knowledge, which
was non-obstructive to the rise of knowledge. If we
are to think that the acts of the soul in Brahmalo-
ka are conscious ones it follows that they are not even
as evolved as perfect Jeevanmuktās who have no
consciousness of individuality. The Prarabdha in
the Jeevanmukta is not experienced by his consci-
ousness; it is not a content of the Absolute
Consciousness; it is existent only to the other ignorant
Jivas who perceive the existence or the movements
of his body.

There is also a passage (Cch UP VIII 14) which
speaks about the soul's entering into Prajapati's
abode and assembly hall. The joy which the soul
experiences in the consciousness of God is expressed
in glowing terms. The Taittiriyaopaniṣad (II 1) says
that the knower of Brahman simultaneously enjoys
with Brahman-consciousness all that he desires for.
The confusion that often hampers our understanding

of the exact nature of the different stages in the process of progressive salvation is increased by the fact that the Upanishads are rarely explicit about it; and they find joy in giving intimations of immortality even with regard to a state which we must very much hesitate to take as the highest. Many times one is at a loss to know whether the Upanishads are giving a metaphorical exclamation of the Experience of the Absolute or a real description of the state of one in Brahmaloка on the way to Krama Mukti. Of course, the instantaneous enjoyments of everything with the Absolute consciousness has to be construed as an intimation of the Ultimate Reality itself, for one in Brahmaloка cannot have a simultaneous experience of the entire existence, which is possible only in the Absolute.

.

However, one thing is certain, that the criterion of salvation lies in that "By knowing God there is a falling off of all fetters, distresses are destroyed; there is cessation of birth and death; there is breaking up of individuality (or bodily nature), there accrues universal lordship, one becomes absolute, and all desires are satisfied." (Svt. Up. I 2) We cannot, somehow, understand how there can be wish and enjoyment when all desires are satisfied. It is said that "it is simple Leela" or sport of the Divine, which, anyhow, is not an explanation of the mystery. But there is no doubt that even the least wish or action however much universal it may be, means a state below the

most exalted Supreme Being. It is clear that all the various statements regarding the different experiences which the liberated soul is said to have must refer to an objective experience in one or the other of the three stages of Virat, Hiranyagarbha and Ishwara, or to the realisation of Brahman Itself. The Upanishads, however, use the word "Brahman" to mean any of the four, and it is this that does not allow us to know much about what they actually mean regarding the definite stages of Truth-realisation. To us it somehow appears that the main stages must be only four: Attainment of (1) universal objective multiplicity consciousness (2) Universal subjective multiplicity consciousness (3) universal Self consciousness, (4) Transcendental Experience. The Mandukyopanishad testifies to the existence of these four states. But the first three experiences are relative and seem to be existent only so long as one exists as an individualised experiencer. There cannot be any logical proof for the existence of these three objective states beyond an individualistic demand. As a later Vedanta has said, "Those dull-witted persons who are unable to realise the unconditioned Supreme Brahman are shown compassion through the description of the Qualified Brahman. When their mind is controlled through meditation on the Qualified Brahman, the One free from all limitations reveals Itself."

—Swami Krishnananda

72. FOUR KINDS OF MUKTI

The Bhakta remains in the Loka where Lord Vishnu resides like an inhabitant of a state. This is Salokya Mukti. In Sameepya Mukti the Bhakta remains in close proximity with the Lord like the attendant of a king. In Sarupya Mukti he gets the same form like that of the Lord like the brother of a king. In Sayujya Mukti he becomes one with the Lord like salt and water. This is the highest rung in the ladder of Bhakti Yoga.

73. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN JEEVANMUKTI AND VIDEHAMUKTI : AN ANECDOTE

The visitor asked, "Swamiji, what is the difference between Jeevanmukti and Videhamukti? As long as the body lasts how can there be Videhamukti?" Swamiji answered, "Jeevanmukti itself is Videhamukti, but there is slight difference. In a Jeevanmukta there is Swaroopansa of the mind. In him Rajas and Tamas are destroyed, but the Sattwic frame of mind remains. It is on account of this Sattwic mind a Jeevanmukta is able to do Lokasangraha. In a Videhamukta there is Aroopanasa of the mind (destruction of the mind without form). Even Sattwa is not there in him. So he cannot do any Lokasangraha.

CHAPTER XI
EXPERIENCES OF SOME
SOUTH INDIAN MYSTICS

IX
CHAPTER XI
EXPERIENCES OF SOME
SOUTH INDIAN MYSTICS

74. MYSTIC EXPERIENCES OF NAYANARS AND SIDDHAS

The southern part of our great country is a land of poetry and mysticism. Her mountain solitudes, cool and pleasant groves, mutts and monasteries and temples on the banks of holy rivers, streams or tanks and stately towers pointing to Heaven have inspired the poets and philosophers.

In the post-epic age, just as Buddhism flourished in the northern part of our country, so about this age Jainism dominated the lives of the ancient Tamils in South India. The Jains have enriched the old Tamil literature and they wielded enormous power over the church and the state in South India. Their gift of vegetarianism to the Southerners deserves for ever to be remembered with gratitude. Till the fifth century A.D., the Tamils developed under Jain influence a pessimistic view of life and looked for solace in renunciation, retirement from the world, and severe austerities.

It was at this stage that sixty-three Saiva Saints made their dramatic appearance at different centres in South India and showed, by their singular example, an entirely new way of life towards attaining salvation. They hailed from various classes of society, the Brahmin, the Kshatriya, the cultivator, the hunter, etc. There were women saints, too. Their

cosmopolitan character and unconventional approach to the problem of life found universal acceptance. To them tile was not different from gold and they cared little for achieving salvation. But they loved to serve humanity towards its spiritual uplift. They showed by the life they lived that it was unnecessary to cut away from family or society for spiritual pursuits, so long as one carried a detached attitude to life and viewed it objectively. Service of Lord Siva—call Him by what name you will, but they chose to call God Siva—serving Him in some way or other is all that mattered to them. For instance, one served the Lord by chanting the Maha Rudram remaining in the water; another by feeding a guest in the Lord's Name before dining; another by cleaning the routes to the temple, and so on. The sixty-three Saints and the nine group-saints fit in broadly under four different categories, according to the means which they followed: physical service called Saria, ritual called Kriya, communion with God called Yoga, and spiritual enquiry called Jnana or Bodha. These fourfold path was also known as Dasa Marga, Putra Marga, Saha Marga and San Marga. The story of their lives contains the lesson and the inspiration, but some of them have, in addition, sung the glory of the Lord.

As the record of their experiences in meditation is apt to be of interest and value to the spiritual aspirant, an attempt is made to present some extracts which contain information on this topic, from their works in the following paragraphs.

Of the many hymns sung in South India the "Thevaram," composed by Saint Appar or Thirunavukkarasu, Sundaramurthy and Jnanasambandar, is accepted as authority by all lovers of the Lord in the South, for gaining His grace and thereby accelerating the pace of evolution. Of the lakhs of hymns sung by the three saints only fragments have come down to us. These were sung by their authors during critical moments of their lives or at the shrines which they had visited. The poems have for their background the philosophy of Saiva Siddhanta which shows the way towards liberation from the shackles of egoism, Karma and illusion (Maya) by the grace of the Guru who is no less than Lord Siva Himself.

Saint Appar was, in his pre-monist life, called Marulneekkyar. Although born of Saiva parents, he came under Jain influence and by dint of his scholarship and ability rose to eminence in the Jain monastic order and he was called 'Dharmasena.' By the grace of Lord Siva, he was afflicted with an incurable colic pain. Under his sister's advice he surrendered to Lord Siva and he was rewarded with instantaneous relief. The king of Kalinga, a Jain, under whom he administered the Jain church, was loth to lose the service of such a valuable convert. Therefore, in order to win him back to Jainism the king persecuted him by throwing him into a lime kiln. Saint Appar came out of the ordeal cheerfully on account of his remaining in communion with the Lord. This is how he described after his release what he had undergone inside the burning kiln :

“ மாசில் வீணையும் மாலை மதியமும்
 வீசு தென்றலும் வீங்கிள வேனிலும்
 பசு வண்டுறைப் பம்புனல் போன்றதே
 ஈசன் எந்தை இணையடி நிழலே ”

—“the shelter at the feet of my Lord, my Father, was like the unerring tune of the lyre, the evening moon, the soothing warmth of early spring, the softly-blowing southern breeze, and the stream covered with the blossoming lotus, the home of the honey-bees.”

As the saint was in a state of ecstasy, he remained oblivious of his environment. But, as he was also in a superconscious state, that helped him afterwards to recollect his mystic experience which was like something melodious to the ear, pleasing to the eye and agreeable and pleasant all over. And he has put his ideas concisely and beautifully. The lyre represents the sound, the origin of the universe. The moon symbolises illumination or wisdom. Then follows the breeze which caused the first stir in the Universe, and then the Sun, the giver of light, direction, colour, and vital warmth and finally we have the stream, which sustains, along with the light, air and warmth, the life of the whole Universe. Here we have an epitome of creation sung in just four beautiful lines. The mystic could accomplish this feat, having come out of communion with the Lord, Who is Omniscient and Omnipresent.

Saint Sundaramurthy, the Yogi, visited a shrine called “Thirumazaipady.” As he was in constant communion with the Lord, although he led a life of

a householder, Sundarar sang : "Of whom else will I think, my Mother, if not Thee?"

“பொன்னூர் மேனியன புலித்தோலை

அரைக்கசைத்து

மின்னூர் செஞ்சடைமேல் மிளிர்க்கொண்கை

யணிந்தவனே

மன்னே மானனியே மழபாடியுள் மானிக்கமே

அன்னே உன்னை யல்லால் இனி யாரை

நினைக்கேனே?”

—“Thou, fair as gold, clad in tiger-skin, decked with shining 'konrai' flowers (marigold), in Thy flaming matted locks, which dazzle like lightning, Thou Eternal Being, purest gem, dwelling at 'Thirumazai-pady'. Thou tender as Mother, if I do not think of Thee, on whom else will I meditate?”

The poet has in the first two lines sung the glory of the all-beautiful and almighty Lord, and in the third line, he shows how by remaining eternal the Lord provides for His creation and, lastly, he confesses his steadfast devotion to the Lord.

While Saint Appar declared his communion with the Lord in the hour of trial, Sundarar confesses his cultivating thought of the Lord constantly as a habit.

Jnanasambandar visited a place called Panayur. He admired the grove of Panayur which presented a scene of honey-laden flowers and were humming with the sound of bees. His thought turned to the Lord and he sang :

“என் ஒன்றி நினைத்தவர் தம்பால்
உள் நின்று மகிழ்ந்தவன் ஊராம்
கள் நின்றெழு சோலையில் வண்டு
பன் நின்றெலி செய் பனையரே”

“This is Panayur, the place of Him, Who delights in staying in the hearts of those who meditate on Him with one-pointed devotion. Here the bees love to settle on the honey-laden flowers in the groves and tune their notes to harmony.”

The hymn expresses the mystic's experience of bliss, which occurs when meditation culminated in Samadhi. Focussing the thought called 'Dharana' is implied in the phrase “(thoughts uniting). This secret process matches well with the colouring the poet gives. As the bees discover plentitude of their sweet food in the flowers, they unite and join their notes in harmony.

In the three verses quoted above the key-note struck by the poets in common is constant communion with the Lord.

Of all the South-Indian mystics, perhaps none has revealed in such clear details the mysteries of communion with the Lord and the bliss arising from that as Manickavachagar has done in his immortal verses known as “Thiruvachakam” (the sacred text). He is not included among the sixty-three saints or the eighteen Siddhars of South India. He had the unique opportunity of coming face to face with the Lord Who manifested Himself as a supreme Master—which He really is—at a place called “Thiruperundurai,”

now known as "Avudayar Koil," nine miles south of "Aranthangi," a station in the Southern Railway. This mystic poet loves to refer frequently in his works to this incident which had marked a turning-point in his life.

He sings:

"முத்தி நெறி யறியாத மூர்க்கோடு

முயல்வேனை

பக்தி நெறி யறிவித்துப் பழனினைகள்

பாறும்வண்ணம்

சித்த மலம் அறிவித்துச் சிவமாக்கி

யெனையான் ட

அத்த னெனக் கருவியவா ரூறிவார்

அச்சோவே"

—"To me, who toiled and moiled 'mid fools
that knew not way of final peace,
He taught the way of pious love, so that old
deeds might cease and flee;
Purging the foulness of my will, made me pure
bliss, took for His own
'Twas thus the Dancer gave me grace,
O Rapture; Who so blest as I?"

(translation by G.V. Pope)

In these lines the poet shows the limitations of temporal or tuitional knowledge. It fails to take us anywhere on the road to Freedom. The word 'moorker' does not exactly mean 'fools' or stubborn ones'. It means "those who scoff at spiritual culture". Contact with the Lord had shown him

how devotion alone could bestow on him intuition (Aparoksha Juana), which destroys the fruits of past Karma. His inner self became purified and he was raised to the state of God (சிவமாக்கி) which none can ever hope to attain. This intensely personal note is characteristic of Manickavachagar.

What is wanted, therefore, is not mere learning but the capacity to feel, to melt away like wax before fire at hearing the very Name of the Lord. And that is his prayer in the following verse :

‘உற்றாரையான் வேண்டேன் ஊர்
வேண்டேன் பேர் வேண்டேன்
கற்றார யாள் வேண்டேன் கற்பதொன்றின்
யமையிம்
குற்றலத் தமர்ந்துரையும் சுத்தா நின்குரை
கழற்கே
கற்றுவின் மனம்போலக் கசிந்துருக
வேண்டுவனே”

—“I ask not for kin, nor name, nor place,
Nor learned man's society,
With Thou one boon on me bestow,
A heart to melt in longing sweet,
As yearns her new born calf the cow,
In yearning for Thy sacred feet?”

(translation by Ms F. Kingsbury and G.E. Phillips)

The above lines show that the mystic has relapsed to worldly consciousness and prays to the Lord to lift him up to that higher plane where he may enjoy the bliss of communion. The Lord had already

shown him the way to it during his meeting at Thiruperundurai. That can be achieved only through profound devotion even as the cow has for the calf she has yielded. Having drunk of the fountain of bliss it is but natural that he should ask for the favour again and again.

Here is a verse which discloses the bliss of communion with the Lord.

“மெய்தா வரும்பி விதிர் விதிர்த்துன்

விரைகழற்கென்

கைதான் தலைமேல் வைத்துக் கண்ணிர்

ததும்பு வெதும்பி யுள்ளம்

பொய்தான் தவிர்ந்துன்கைப் போற்றி

சயசய போற்றி யென்னும்

கைதான் நெடுவிரிவிடே னுடையாய் என்னைக்

கண்டு கொள்ளே”

—“Thrills and trembles my frame,

Hands are lifted on high,

Here at Thy fragrant feet,

Sobbing and weeping I cry,

Falsehood forsaking, I shout,

‘Victory, Victory, Praise!’

Lord of my life, these clasped hands,

Worship shall bring Thee always.”

(translation by Ms. F. Kingsbury and G.E. Phillips)

The foregoing lines are characteristic of Manickavachagar. He shows the measure of man and God in those expressions “hands lifted on high”, which could not reach beyond “His feet”. By the term

'falsehood forsaking' he implies transcending the physical, astral, and other planes which, by virtue of their fleeting existence, are necessarily false and so are the fruits of Karma. The triumph of spirit over matter and the immanence of the Lord are shown in the closing lines.

The Siddhars or the South-Indian mystics, of whom eighteen are popularly known, offer the highest spiritual truths in the language of the masses. They have the gift of clothing lofty thoughts in simple expressions. Transcending the borders of caste and convention they may appear to be somewhat shockingly heterodox in some of their songs. Beggars in South India are often found to accost for alms with the songs of the Siddhar on their lips, although they are blissfully ignorant of what they sing!

Here is a verse of Siva Vakkiar, who says why he preserves silence before people of the world.

“செய்ய தெங்கிலே யினரீர் சேர்த்த

காரணங்கள் போல

ஐயன் வந்து என்னுளம் புகுந்து கோயில்

கொண்டனன்

ஐயன் வந்து என்னுளம் புகுந்து கோயில்

கொண்டபின்

வையகத்தில் மாந்தர் முன்னம் வாய் திறப்ப

தில்லையே”

—“for the same reason as water wells up in the ripe cocoanut, so my Lord had entered my heart and made it His Temple. After my Lord had found His

Temple in my heart, I ceased to open my mouth before the people of the world."

The mystic reveals to us that as water wells up in the cocoanut when it has developed in due time, so when the aspirant is sufficiently evolved, he grows conscious of the Lord's presence in his heart. Then he does not discuss with worldly-minded people his mystic experience, for fear lest he should understate. Who had it are silent. They that talk had it not !

Pattinathar whom it is difficult, if not impossible, to find a more determined adjurer of the world, had at one time tasted of the bliss of communion. He yearns for it in the following lines:

“நீரூர்த்த மேனி யுரோமஞ் சிலிர்த்துள
 நெக்கு நெக்கு
 சேரூக் கசிந்து கசிந்தே யுன் சோடிக்கே
 மாறத் தியான முற்றுனந்த மேற்கொண்டு
 மார்பிற் கண்ணீர்
 ஆராய் பெரிக்கி கிடப்பதென்றே
 கயிலாயத்தானே?”

—“O Lord of Kailas, when will that state come about? The body covered with ashes should thrill, and the heart should be pounded and melted like soft clay for love of Thy sacred feet. The unbroken meditation should ripen into bliss and I lie down with tears of joy flooding like a river in torrents over my breast.”

The verse is self-explanatory and needs no comments. The advantages of controlling the mind are

shown in the following lines ascribed to Saint Agastya, although it is doubtful whether he or anybody else is the author:

“மனமது செம்மையானால் மந்திரஞ் செபிக்க
வேண்டாம்

மனமது செம்மையானால் வாயுவை யுயர்த்த
வேண்டாம்

மனமது செம்மையானால் வாசியை நிறுத்த
வேண்டாம்

மனமது செம்மையானால் மந்திரம்
செம்மையாமே

—“Should the mind come under control, there is no need to utter the spell, should the mind be controlled, it is unnecessary to raise the breath; should mind-control be attained, it is needless to curb our tendencies; should the mind come under control, the spell will prove effective.”

His Holiness Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj has given us a wealth of details about mind-control in two of his outstanding publications, viz., ‘Mind, Its Mysteries and Control’ and ‘Concentration and Meditation.’

Conquest of the mind is the greatest conquest, says a Hindi proverb. “If you conquer mind, you have conquered the world.”

“Moksha does not mean physical separation from all worldly affairs, but only a state of mind bereft of all impure Vasanas and clinging to worldly things, but yet working as usual amidst them. You must

realise God in and through the world. This is the central teaching of the Gita. This is the central teaching of Yoga Vasishtha also.

"But the disciplined (lower) self, moving among sense-objects free from attraction and repulsion, and mastered by the higher Self, goeth to Peace."

—Extract from 'Mind-Its Mysteries and Control'.

As for the songs of the eighteen Siddhars, they have left us a fair field of spiritual crops, which lie yet unharvested, and which are waiting to be garnered and offered to the outside world. It is, of course, up to abler hands to undertake the task.

The claim of mystic poetry to popularity rests upon its breathing the very soul and spirit of the author. Poetry, properly so-called, charms us by its genuine lyric impulse. This impulse is sublimated into devotion to God in mystic poetry. Apart from merely reporting their experiences during communion, the mystics give this message of poetry to the world,

(Sri P.S. Varadaraja Iyer)

75. SAINT TIRUMULAR

Tirumular's origin, the circumstances that led to his leaving Kailas and to his settling down in the land of the Tamils, the social forces that inspired him to produce the immortal Tirumantram, all these are lost in the mists of antiquity. We do not even know the real name of this great sage. Tirumular is the name he acquired later when he became shepherd. No historical background is possible. We have, therefore, to turn to another great treatise, Periya Puranam, for what it has to say on the story of his life.

The sage, says, Periya Puranam, came to Tamil Nad from Kailas to meet his friend Agastya. After offering worship at several famous shrines, he reached Sattanur, a village on the banks of the Kaveri, where he witnessed the tragic spectacle of a herd of cows weeping over the corpse of a shepherd. Evidently, the shepherd had met with sudden death, and the cows, feeling that some great tragedy had befallen their master, stood hovering about the body, unwilling to move away. They smelled it, and tears rolled down their long white cheeks like silvery rivulets.

This moving sight struck a responsive chord in the sage, and he decided to end the agony of the cows. As one who had mastered the eight Siddhis, he knew the technique of moving from one body to

another. He cast aside his body in a safe place, and penetrated into the shepherd's body. The shepherd immediately came to life and got up. The cows danced with joy on seeing their master alive again.

The sage who now lived in the body of the shepherd (his name was Mulan) followed the cows back to the village in the evening. But he stood in the street without entering Mulan's house. Mulan's wife who was awaiting her husband's return came out, and was puzzled to find him standing in the street. She called him in, and moved up to take his hand. But he stepped aside, and ask her not to touch him. He denied he had any relationship whatsoever with her. Then he entered into a neighbouring mutt, and was soon immersed in deep contemplation.

Mulan's wife would not be consoled easily. How could the poor woman know that her husband was no more and that another saintly soul was now dwelling in his body? She complained to her relatives against her husband's behaviour and cried that he had lost his senses. Some of the elders of the village who saw him at the mutt were wise enough to perceive that the shepherd was in a state of Samadhi. They, therefore, asked her not to disturb him, but to leave him alone.

When the sage emerged from contemplation the next morning, he straightaway, went to the spot where he had left his body. But it was not to be found there! He then realised that he was destined

to spend the rest of his life as Mulan the shepherd, that it was God's will that he should fulfil His purpose as a shepherd.

Known thence forth as Tirumular (derived after the shepherd's name Mulan), he left Sattanur and reached Tiruvavaduthurai, where he sat under a Bodhi tree and passed into a state of deep contemplation. Once a year he woke up, and each time he composed a stanza containing the cream of his spiritual experiences during the year. It took 3000, years for him to compose the 3000 stanzas comprising Tirumantram.

This account of his life in Peria Puranam gives perhaps a clue to the state of society which obtained at the time of Tirumular. Why did Tirumular choose to come down all the way to the land of the Tamils? How did it come to pass that this great exponent of the Vedas and the Agamas was given the form of shepherd in a lower rung of the social ladder to expound the great Saiva Siddhanta school of philosophy? And why was Saiva Siddhanta particularly chosen in preference to other systems of thought? It is well that we seek here some answer to these questions, if only for obtaining a correct appreciation of some of the stanzas in Tirumantram, such as, for instance, those expressing his strong condemnation of the pretensions of impostors masquerading as saints and seers.

Presumably, early Indian thought, which gave birth to some of the greatest metaphysical systems

the world has ever seen, received a setback, and an era of sterility and stagnation had commenced. True learning and character were eclipsed by principles and practices justifying social malpractices. The true import of the Vedas and the Agamas was allowed to be lost in the jungle of rituals and dogmas. Tamil Nad, the cradle of Saiva Siddhanta, had become the breeding ground of false prophets who used religion and philosophy for securing personal advantages. Such, obviously, was the state of Tamil society which Tirumular felt compelled to reconstruct on lines set forth in the Vedas and the Agamas and as he understood them in the light of his spiritual experiences.

Tirumular wanted humanity to share the divine bliss which he himself had enjoyed. This sharing of his happiness, this freedom of the soul from ignorance and bondage, cannot however be secured unless, first, some of the fundamental tenets of Saiva Siddhanta were instilled into the minds of the people.

Tirumular taught that the liberation of the Pasu (soul) was not dependent on the caste, high or low, of the person in whom it dwells; that the soul can attain freedom only if one followed the right path without allowing oneself to be diverted towards blind alleys; that Saiva Siddhanta, which is the cream of the Vedas and the Agamas, opens the window that reveals true knowledge.

This account, therefore, of Tirumular's teachings Tirumantram as a shepherd, should serve to

emphasise his advice that, inasmuch as the soul and not the body that must needs be freed from bondage, any person, be here or high or low birth, can seek to attain Sivananda (divine bliss). That he should have come from Kailas to Tamil Nad in the extreme South may be taken as reflecting his anxiety that the correct principles of Saiva Siddhanta should again be taught and reinforced in the land of its birth, where social conditions had so altered as to obliterate the prime principles of the Vedas and the Agamas. If the Vedas may be described as the tree of knowledge, the Agamas are its branches and leaves and fruits. While the Vedas content themselves with stating that the soul is the Brahman, the Agamas instruct and guide in leading the soul towards its union with the Absolute Being.

76. SAINT THIRUNAVUKURASAR

Thirunavukurasar was one of the four saints, the pillars of Saivism, who re-established Siva Worship in South India, at a time when Buddhism and Jainism threatened to wipe out the indigenous religion and culture of the land. A contemporary of Jnanasambandar, one other in this group, Appar as he was otherwise known lost his parents at an early age; he had an only sister, Thilagavathiar, who herself was a Saint; she had dedicated her life to Lord Siva, having lost her fiance who died in a battle. Thirunavukurasar was a man of great learning and erudition; Maruneekear, as he was named by his parents, embraced Jainism to the great sorrow of Thilagavathiar. Day and night she invoked Lord Siva to bring her brother back into the fold of Saivism. She was promised that the brother would be subjected to a dire stomach disease, which would cause him to come back to the religion of his ancestors. In the meantime Maruneekear was made the leader of the Jains, who utilised this luminary for the propagation of their faith. Time was for Saivism to come to its own and Navukurasar developed the predestined stomach disease. His co-religionists did all in their power to relieve their leader, but to no avail. Finally in desperation he sought the protection, care and blessing of his famous sister, whose first act was to take him to Veeraddaneshwar

temple, and offer prayers of thanksgiving to Lord Veeraddaneshwar.

"Suffering though like a toad, yet wears a jewel in its crown" said Shakespeare. The excruciating pain, incurable as the Jains found it, was the turning point in Appar's life. He invokes Lord Veeraddaneshwar and loses himself in the following verse :

“கற்றாயினவாறு விலக்ககலிர் கொடுமைபல
செய்தவ நானறியென்
எற்றாயடிக்கே யிரவுப்பகலும் பிரியாது
வணங்குவ னெப்பொழுதும்
தோற்றுதென் வயிற்றினகம்படியே
குடரோடு துடக்க முடக்கியிட
ஆற்றேவடியே னதிகைக்கெடில வீரட்
டரனத் துறையுமமானே”

O Lord ! Veeraddhaneshwar, Relieve me of this dire disease. I know not of having ever been cruel. Thou hast taken me into Thy fold; I shall invoke Thee continuously day and night; I can no more bear this ill that has come upon me and make me wriggle with an excruciating pain.

In the above, it is clear that Navukkurasar's surrender is the result of desperation. Probably due to being a brilliant poet his hymns easily excel those of Manikavachagar.

His Jain friends finding themselves in a precarious position, plan to get him back into their fold by reporting to the king that he feigned the illness. in order to go back to his sister and requested the

latter to have him punished. Navukurasar's reply to the first in the land, speaks for itself :

“நாமார்க்குப் குடியல்லோம்
 குழையோர் காதிற்
 கோமார்க்கே நாமென்று மீளாவாளாய்,
 கொய்மலர்ச் சேளடியுனையேகுழகினோமே”

“He alone can be spiritual, who can defy kings and spurn wealth and women.”

“The weak man cannot realise this Atma.”

“I am subject to none. I fear not Yama (the lord of death) neither shall I suffer in hell. I am happy. I know not disease. I pay homage to no one. I have given up myself to him, the Supreme, the Shankaran, that Sovereign with the Kundalam in one ear (the Kundalam in one ear only indicates the Ardhanaareeshwara Moorthi.)

He refuses to go, but the ministers persuade him and take him to the King, who ill-advised by the Jains, orders that he be put in a room filled with lime. Appar's faith changed the burning atmosphere of the room into one of a cool shelter. His experience is best expressed in his own words.

“மாசில் வீனையும் மாலை மதியும்
 வீசு தென்றிலும் வீங்கிள வேனிலும்
 முசு வண்டறை பொய்கையும் போன்றதை
 ஈசன் எந்தை யினையடி நிழற்றே

“The shelter at Ishwar my Father's feet is the celestial music of the Veena, the gentle breeze, the

morning sun, the lotus-covered lake with the humming of the bees."

"விறகிற் றியினன் பாவிற்படு நெய்த்பால்
மறைய நின் றானன் மாவணிச் சாசுதியான்
உறவு கொண்ட டுணர்வு கயிற்றின் திமுறுக
வாங்கிக்கடைய முன்னிற்றோ "

"The potential fire in wood; the gem of the purest ray, is beyond perception; unseen like the ghee in milk. With knowledge as churner and Love as the rope, churn well your heart and He will appear to you."

Appar was a combination of Jnana (knowledge) and Bhakti. To Thayumanavar learning was an obstacle to God-realisation.

"The uneducated are really the good" said Thayumanavar.

But to Appar knowledge led him to love God. His faith was founded on the rock of conviction born of knowledge.

On seeing Thirunavukurasar, as cool as a cucumber in that terrible room the Jains requested the King to get him killed by an elephant. Woe unto them they but dug their own graves for the elephant paid him homage and becoming turbulent destroyed the evil doers themselves. The Saint invokes the Lord.

"சன்னலென் சந்தனச் சாந்துஞ் சடர்

நிங்கட் சூனாமனியும்

வண்ணவுரிமை யுடையும் வளரும் பவன
 நிறமும்
 வன்னலரன் முரனேறு மகலம் யளாய்
 வளமும்
 நின்னன்கெடிலப் புனறு முடையா
 ரொருவற் றபர்காம்
 அஞ்சுவது யாதொன் றுமில்லை அஞ்
 வருவது மில்லை

He visualises Siva and being merged in the form automatically describes his Ishta Moorthi.

"I am His man, with sandal paste as white as lime, whose head the crescent moon and the jewel adorns, whose body of coral hue is covered with the elephant skin, a snake as big as the one on which Krishna* rests, adorns his neck and on his crest is the mighty Ganges, I fear nothing, nothing can frighten me".

Appar's faith seems to be the type that could remove mountains. He knew he loved Siva was the rock of his faith.

Even this would not deter the Jains of their evil determination to liquidate the saint. They got him tied to a boulder and pushed him into the sea. This final and last test of the Lord proved the calibre of Appar's faith. He says, "Come whatever may. I shall always sing the Lord's glories", and invokes Siva with that ever-famous hymn, that immortalises the Divine Pancha Akshara 'Namah Sivaya' the ambrosia of the Saivaita.

“சொற்றுனை வேதியன் சோதி வானவன்
பொற்றுனை திருந்தடி பொருந்தக் கைதொழ
கற்றுனை பூட்டியோர் கடலிற் பாய்ச்சினும்
நற்றுனை யாவது நமச்சி வாயவோ”

The Brahma! His name is my succour! As
effulgent as the sky, if one does but surrender one-
self unto his Lotus-Feet, even if one were tied to a
boulder and thrown into the sea, one's unfailing
saviour is His Name 'Namah Sivaya'.

He floats on this boulder and the waves carry
him to Thiru Pathri Puliur overwhelmed by the
Lord's mercy, he sings

“ஈன்றாளுமா யெனக் கெந்தையுமா யுடன்
தோன்றினராய்
முன்றயுலகம் படைத்து கந்தான் மனத்து
ளிருக்க
வேன்ற னிமையவர்க் கன்பன் திருப் பாதிரிப்
புலியூர்த்
தோன்றாத் துணையா யிருந்தனன் தன்னடி
யோங்களுக்கே”

(He of Paathiripuliur the beloved of the celestials,
was my invisible guide; He who delights in creat-
ing the three worlds is in my heart, He my mother,
my father, my sisters and brothers and all)

Later he visited various temples and reached
Thiruthoonaganar where he invokes Lord Siva to
impress the marks of the sacred bull and Trident on

his body to purify it of the sin of having been to Jain.

“பொன்னூர் திருவடிக் கொன்றுண்டு

வின்னப்பம் போற்றிப்பெரி

மென்னொரு காப்பதற் கிச்சையுண்டே

விருங்கு மற்றவ

யின்னொரு மிலிலைச் சூலமென்மேற் பொற்றிமேவு

கொண்டற்

றுன்னூர் கடந்தையுட் டிங்களை மாடச் சடர்க்

கொழந்தே”

‘There is a request to be made at Thy golden feet; if Thou desireth me to live, impress the mark of Thy Trident on my body, O Lord Thiruthoonaganar of Pennar Kadanthar’.

Gradually Appar's vision expands; from seeing Siva only in the images, he rises to a stage of seeing Him as the substratum of the Universe. In Chidambaram he perceives Siva as the All or more than All.

“அரியானை.....

கரியானை நான் முகனை கனலை காற்றைறற்க்

கனைகயலைக் குலவரையை—கலந்து நின்ற.

பெரியானைப் பெரும்பிற்றப் புலியுரானைப்

பேசாதநாளெல்லாம் பிறவாநாளே.”

He is Vishnu, Brahma, Fire, Air, Water, Mountain, the great, the presiding Deity of Puliur; that day which passeth without my singing His glories, is not a day.

He is more and more absorbed in the Lord, to the extent of rising above his physical consciousness.

In Vetharanyam he alone with Jnanasambandhar, finds the main door of the temple closed and the side-door used by the worshippers. Requested by Sambandhar he sings :

“பன்னி னோர்மொழி யாளுமை பங்கரோ
மன்னி னூர்வலஞ் செம்மைக் காடரோ
கன்னி னாலுமைக் கானக் கதவினைத்
தின்ன மாகத் திறந்தருள் செய்மினே”

“Thou Lord with her, of the musical voice (Nada Shakti) as Thy one half, Thou of Maraikadu, whom the world adores, Open the doors that Thou may be seen with these eyes, He continues :

“அரகனை.... ..சரக்கவிக்கதவந் திறப்பினை
மினே”

Thou that crushed Ravana with Thy Toe, hast thou no mercy, O Lord! Indweller of Maraikaadu, overgrown with Punnai trees! Have the doors opened, that Thou mayst be seen”.

The service Appar gave himself up, was to sing the infinite glories of Lord Siva, and stimulate Bhakti in all whom he came across. At the final stages he bloomed into a Parabhakta who saw the Lord in everything.

“வின்னுகி நிலனுகி விசம்புமாகி வேலைசூழ்
ஞாலத்தார் விரும்புகின்ற

என்னுகி யெழுத்தாகி யியல்புமாகி யேழுலகும்
தொதேத்திக் கானநின்ற
கன்னுகி மனியாகி கடுட்சியாகிக் காதலித்தம்
பன்னுகி யின்னமுதாம் பாசுரமே
பரஞ்சுடரைக் கண்டடியே னுய்ந்தவாரே”

“Thou art the celestial regions, the earth, the sky, the erudition yearned for by the ocean girdeth world, the eye that perceiveth the seven planes, the very pupil in that eye, the vision, the beloved music of the Bhaktas, the ambrosia of their hymns, the Light Supreme, the sight that saved me.”

Appar at best was an explorer in the spiritual world. There is no evidence of his soul merging into the Being of God; to Navukkarasar Siva was always a separate entity worthy of his adoration. He might have known the noumena intellectually, but all his experiences were of the phenomena. Even in his last verse he experiences a God as separate from himself i.e. he had not succeeded in annihilating his mind.

“புண்ணியா உன்னடிக்கே போதுகின்றேன்”
“Unto Thy feet I come, Virtuous Lord!”

77. SAINT MANICKAVACHAGAR

He is a mystic who is one with the Cosmos, who realises that his consciousness is of Divine Source, nay, Divinity Itself, enclosed in a physical form, with a mission in life that can only be fulfilled by meeting the conditions and carrying out the world-duties and obligations. The realisation of the Soul-identity of God and man is the mystic's victory in his arduous search. Discovering that reflective experience alone gives access to a deeper life and that every thought attains the dignity of a subtle communication between him and the Divine ministrations, he begins to break down the numerous physical and mental limitations. God and Soul can only meet in the sanctuary of Consciousness which is Truth itself. Perception of the Divine opulence is an experience of the inner eye. Numerous such experiences are immortalised in the Psalms that the Saiva Saints of South India poured forth in their moments of ecstasy.

Saint Manickavachagar, that glorious Bhakta, one of the most eminent of God's Prophets the world all over, after that famous initiation under the 'Kurutha' tree, makes an impression of his Guru's Feet and continues offering his worship to the sacred feet. One good day he feels that the Lord is merciful to those who sing His Praises, even if they did not love Him and expresses his ecstasy in the Psalm

நமச்சிவாய வாழ்க”

“ஆராத இன்பம் அருளுமலை போற்றி
சிவனவனினை சிந்தையுள் நின்ற அதனால்
அவனருளாலே அவன்ருள் வணகிச்.....”

—The peak that bestows unsatiating joy, Siva, He who forever resides in my heart, by His Grace I worship His Feet.

“நீராயுருக்கியென் ஆருயிராய் நின்றானே”

“Thou hast melted me like water, Thou That art my very life.” This is Manickavasagar's very experience.

In Puliur this Saint loses himself in Siva and bursts forth with the “Keerthi Thiru Agaval”. Here he refers to the various occasions the Lord has appeared and protected him:

- a. “குதிரையைக்கொண்டு குடநாதன் மிசைச்
சூதர்ப்பீச் சாத்தாய்த்தானெழுந்தருளியும்”
- b. “நரியைக்கு திரையாக்கிய நன்மையையும்”
- c. “அந்தணனாகி யாண்டுகொண்டருளி
இந்திரஜாலங்காட்டிய இயல்வும்”
- d. குதிரைச் சேவகனாகிய கொள்கையும் ஆங்கு
தன்னில்
அடியவள்காகப் பாங்காய் மண்சுமந்தருளிய
பருசும்”

Manickavachagar goes on the king's errand to buy horses for his master. On the way under the Kurutha tree, he sees a Guru along with his disciples. He forgets his errand, surrenders himself unto the Guru, who, he later finds, is the Lord Himself.

c. "You had come as a Brahmin and revealed to me the celestial planes."

The Saint had spent all the money he had brought with him to buy horses, on the temple. When the king inquired as to when the horses would be brought, he pleads to the Lord, (a) Who Himself appears with the horses as a horse-trader. These horses turn into jackals the same night. The king imprisons the minister and subjects him to various tortures. The Vaigai river overflows and inundates the Pandya kingdom. All subjects were ordered to build a bund. An old woman had none to do her share of the work. The Lord Himself offers His services to her in return to the spoilt 'pittus' that she had made. All 'pittus' were unsaleable. He, the Lord, ate it all, but did no work. Pandyan gets furious and hits Him on His back. The whole universe experiences this pain, revealing that the Lord is the substratum of the universe. The king realises the Divine Nature of his minister and prays to him for his forgiveness. These were a sequence of events following Manickavachagar's initiation. Every experience was as real to him as is hunger to the poor or pain to the sick.

Again, in Thiruvandapaguthi, he says:

“கண்ணுலியானும் கண்டேன் காண்க
அருணணிசுரக்கும் அமுதே காண்க
கருணையின் பெருமை கண்டேன் காண்க
புவனியார் சேவடி தீத்தினன் காண்க”

—I saw Him, the Ambrosia that bestows mercy

I experienced His Garce, He walked on earth,
(for me)."

"செற்பதங்கடன்த தொல்லோன் "

—the Ancient, beyond description.

"உள்ளத்துணர்ச்சியிற் கொள்ளனவும்

படான்

கண்முதற்புலனாற் காட்சியுமில்லோன்
விண்முதற்பூதப் வெளிப்பட வகுத்தேன்
பூவினாற்றப் போன்றுயர் திங்கும்
ஒழிவா நிறைந்து மேவிய பெருமை
இன்றெனக் கெளிவன்தருளி
ஆழிதரும் ஆக்கையொழியச்செய்த

ஒண்பொருள் "

Manickvachagar realise that, He is beyond thought. He is not within the experience of the senses ; He who created the five elements, He who pervades the universe, as does the aroma of a flower, but He, even He, reveals Himself to me today, saves me from being born again." The Saint experiences this state of consciousness. He goes on describing how the Lord is beyond the reach of even Brahma, Vishnu, etc.

"கடங்கையின் நெல்லிக்கனியெனக்

காயினன் "

—"To me He is as real as the Amlaka fruit in my palm."

"சொல்லுவதறியேன் வாழிமுறையோ

தரியேன் நாயேன் தானனை கெய்தது

தெரியேன் ஆவா செத்தேன் அடியேற்
கருளியதறியேன் பருதியும் ஆனேன்
விழுங்கியும் ஒல்லகில்லேன்”

a concrete experience the Saint is unable to bear
“Praise Thee, how shall I describe this ! Is this right
on your part ? What have you done to me, I do not
know; Oh, what Grace you have bestowed on me.

உள்ளதந் நகுதும்ப வாக்கிறந்தமுதம் மயிர்க்
கால் தோறும் தேக்கிடச்செய்தனன்

He experiences a state of consciousness beyond
words ; “Heart overflows, too deep for words. You
have made Ambrosia seethe through every pore.”

“அற்புதமான அமுத தாரைகள்
ஏற்புத்துளை தொறும் ஏற்றினன்”

“He made the Ambrosia flow through my very
bones.”

Again, in Thirusathagam, he expresses the way in
which he experiences Siva's Grace.

“காட்டாதன வெல்லாம் காட்டிப் பின்னுங்
கேளாதனவெல்லாம் கேட்பித்தென்கை
மீட்டேயும் பிறவாவற் கிரத்தாட்

: கொண்டான்

He showed me the invisible, made me hear the
unhearable ; protected me from being born again.”

அசாந்தீர்த் தூட்கொண்டானமுதமீறி
அகநெகவே புகுந்தாண்டான் அன்பு கூர்”

"His Grace removed my fear, made me His devotee. He ruled me such that the Ambrosia has melted my heart."

"தழுவது கண்ட மெகதுபோல்த் தொழுது உள்ளம் உருகி யழுதுடல் கம்பித்த ஆடியும் அலறியும் பாடியும் பரவியும் கொறும் பேதையும் கண்டது விடாதினும் படியேயாகினால் விடையது

This is another description of one of Manivachagar's many moods of ecstasies—"The heart, melts like wax in fire; I cry, dance, I sing, I praise; Stubbornly I hold on to Thee, loving Thee incessantly the Oceanic Love melts my heart, hairs stand on ends, the world laughs, thinking I am possessed.

I weep and cry like a calved cow; I do not even dream of another God (when) You appear to me on earth and initiate me."

The 'Thiruvachagam abounds with Manickavachagar's remembrances of his ecstasies. God to him was a concrete experience.

CHAPTER XII
EXPERIENCES OF
SOME CHRISTIAN MYSTICS

THE HISTORY OF
THE
CHRISTIAN MYSTICS

78. EXPERIENCES OF SOME CHRISTIAN MYSTICS

I

The name of the great apostle Saint Paul was Saul. Being the youngest child, his parents affectionately called him, Paul. A staunch Pharisee, he was a strict adherent of his Biblical law, and hated everyone of the "Jewish Christians" who failed to observe the prescriptions and prohibitions of the Mosaic Code. He persecuted them. On one occasion he watched the stoning of a Christian by the name of Stephen. Instead of expressing pity, at this tragic spectacle, he resolved in burning hatred to erase the entire sect of Christians. With this determination he set out to the city of Damascus; but on the way his soul was possessed by a very remarkable experience. In the twenty-second chapter of the Acts of the Holy Bible, he tells us: "And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come night unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest: And they that were with me beheld indeed the light, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go

into Damascus. And there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus."

In the twelfth chapter of the II Corinthians, Saint Paul gives the character of his revelation, thus: "It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body I know not or whether out of the body I know not; God knoweth) such a one caught up even to the third heaven. And I know such a man (whether in the body or apart from the body I know not; God knoweth) how that he was caught up into paradise and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. On behalf of such a one will I glory; but on mine own behalf I will not glory, save in my weaknesses. For if I should desire to glory I shall not be foolish; for I shall speak the truth; but I forbear, lest any man should account of me above that which he seeth me to be, or heareth from me. And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations—wherefore that I should not be exalted overmuch there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

Paul says in Galatians, that the gospel he preached came to him through revelations of Jesus Christ. "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Intensive poetic insight enabled the great Italian poet to come to experience visions and revelations spiritual in character. In his *Divine Comedy*, Dante says: "The glory of Him who moves everything penetrates through the universe and shines in one part more and in another less. In the heaven that receives most of its light I have been, and have seen things which he who descends from there above neither knows how nor is able to recount." "On a sudden day seemed to be added to day as if he who is able had adorned the heaven with another sun." "Beatrice (Divine Love) was standing with her eyes wholly fixed on the eternal wheels, and on her I fixed my eyes from there above removed. Looking at her, I inwardly became such as Glaucus became on tasting of the herb which made him consort in the sea of the other gods. Transhumanising cannot be signified in words; therefore, let example suffice for him to whom grace reserves experience. If I were only what of me thou didst last create, O love that governest the heavens, thou knowest, who with thy light didst lift me." (*Dante: Paradise*. Translated by Charles Eliot Norton.)

St. John of the Cross (John Yepes) took to excessive austerities, quite early in life. During the

twenties of his life, he suffered much anguish of mind and experienced violent temptations. His austerities were too rigorous and he preserved himself in purity and devotion to God. At the beginning of the thirties of his life, he experienced a paradise of interior delights and heavenly sweetness. Whenever he came from prayer, a certain brightness always emanated from his face. When for adhering to some monastic forms, he was put into prison, on a certain night his cell became filled with heavenly light. When the day of his release from the prison was drawing close, he heard from the light surrounding him, the Lord say: "John, I am here: be not afraid; I will set thee free." He said: "The soul of one who serves God always swims in joy, always keeps a holiday, is always in her palace of jubilation, ever singing with fresh ardor and fresh pleasure, a new song of joy and love." Of his entry into divine awareness, Saint John of the Cross says in his poems, "I entered, but I knew not where, and there I stood not knowing, all science transcending. I knew not where I entered, for when I stood within, not knowing where I was, I heard great things. What I heard I will not tell; I was there as one who knew not, all science transcending." "I stood enraptured in ecstasy, beside myself, and in my every sense no sense remained. My spirit was endowed with understanding, understanding nought, all science transcending."

About the poet and engraver, William Blake William Rossetti writes in the Prefatory Memoir to

The Poetical Works of William Blake: "Rapt in a passionate yearning, he realised, even on this earth and in his mortal body, a species of Nirvana: his whole faculty, his whole personality, the very essence of his mind and mould, attained to absorption into his ideal ultimate, into that which Dante's profound phrase designates "*il Ben dell' intellectto*." Both in his artistic productions and in his poetry, intuition has played a very large part. He derived his conceptions from supersensuous realms of htought. He says that he wrote his poem *The Jerusalem* "from immediate dictation, twelve or sometimes twenty or thirty lines at a time, without premeditation, and even against my will." Its authors, he maintains, are in eternity.

Much that Walt Whitman wrote savours of the purely spiritual in thought. His was a peculiar mystic temperament. There is that beautiful spiritual interrogation of Whitman :

Hast never come to thee an hour,

A sudden gleam divine, precipitating, bursting all
these bubbles, fashions, wealth ?

And there is that fine prose passage : "And again lo! the pulsations in all matter, all spirit, throbbing for ever—the eternal beats, eternal systole and dyastole of life in things—wherefrom I feel and know that death is not the ending, as we thought, but rather the real beginning, and that nothing ever is or can be lost nor even die, nor soul nor matter." Addressing himself to God he says :

Thou knowest my manhood's solemn and
visionary meditations

O I am sure they really came from Thee,
The urge, the ardor, the unconquerable will,
The potent, felt, interior command, stronger than
words,

A message from the Heavens, whispering to me
even in sleep,

These sped me on.

One effort more, my altar this bleak sand;
That Thou O God my life hast lighted,
With ray of light, steady, ineffable, vouchsafed of
Thee,

Light rare untellable, lighting the very light,
Beyond all signs, descriptions, languages;
For that O God, be it my latest word, here on my
knees,

Old, poor, and paralyzed, I think Thee.

My hands, my limbs grew nerveless,
My brain feels rack'd, bewilder'd,
Let the old timbers part I will not part,
I will cling fast to Thee O God, though the waves
buffet me,

Thee, Thee at least I know.

William Wordsworth too had had his mystic moods.

And in that blessed mood

In which the burden of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened :— that serene and blessed mood
In which the affections gently lead us on,—

Until the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and becomes a living soul.

He had felt

A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thought; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man—
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.

Alfred Tennyson had had his own experiences of metaphysical and mystical nature. In the *Ancient Sage* we find this passage :

More than once when I
Sat all alone, revolving in myself
The word that is the symbol of myself,
The mortal limit of the Self was loosed,
And passed into the nameless, as a cloud,
Melts into heaven. I touch'd my limbs, the limbs
Were strange, not mine—and yet no shade of doubt
But utter clearness, and thro' loss of Self
The gain of such large life as matched with ours
Were sun to spark—unshadowable in words,
Themselves but shadows of a shadow-world.

In the second volume of Lord Alfred Tennyson :
A Memoir by His Son, there is this passage: "He said
again, with deep feeling in January, 1869 : Yes it is

true there are moments when the flesh is nothing to me, when I feel and know the flesh to be the vision, God and the spiritual—the only real and true. Depend upon it the spiritual is the real; it belongs to one more than the hand and the foot. You may tell me that my hand and my foot are only imaginary symbols of my existence. I could believe you, but you never, never can convince me that the 'I' is not an eternal reality, and that the spiritual is not the true and real part of me. These words he spoke with such passionate earnestness that a solemn silence fell on us as he left the room."

79. EXPERIENCES OF SOME CHRISTIAN MYSTICS

II

To the world of general religious experience, the contributions of Christian Mystics are as remarkable as they are varied. The history of Western Mysticism is studded with the most illuminating examples of those great personages who have shifted their lives, through unique subjective individual experiences, from a self-centered existence to a world of rich God-centred living. They had cast aside whatever separated them from the deepest Ground of their inner being; and, they may be characterised in the famous phrase of Plotinus, the great, Neoplatonic philosopher of Alexandria, as those who sought the "flight of the Alone to the Alone". Many are the forms of illumination they came to attain; and many too are the enthralling narrations of their conversions, their transformations, the emancipated conditions of their soul.

The soul of Plotinus was consumed by a passion for the transcendental Reality. His disciple Porphyry claims that on four occasions he saw his master rapt in ecstatic union with "the One". In an ecstatic condition of oneness with God, "the soul," Plotinus maintains, "neither sees, nor distinguishes by seeing, nor imagines that there are two things; but becomes as it were another thing, ceases to be

itself and belong to itself. It belongs to God and is one with Him, like two concentric circles : concurring they are one ; but when they separate, they are two."

Of his glimpse of the Godhead, a great saint, Augustine, says in the seventh book of his *Confessions*, "My mind withdrew its thoughts from experience, extracting itself from the contradictory throng of sensuous images, that it might find out what that light was wherein it was bathed... And thus, with the flash of one hurried glance, it attained to the vision of *That Which Is*." Referring to his pre-converted period he says in the same book, "I heard Thy voice from on high crying unto me, 'I am the Food of the full-grown : grow, and then thou shalt feed on Me. Nor shalt thou change Me into thy substance as thou changest the food of thy flesh, but thou shalt be changed into mine.'"

The founder of the order of the Franciscan Monks, Saint Francis, of Assisi had a strange vision in which he saw an angel descend from heaven, with the marks of crucifixion on his body, and that he himself felt the pains of crucifixion at the same moment, and preserved the same marks in his flesh. This experience had altered his entire internal life and heightened his transcendental consciousness.

A remembrance of the experience of his individual soul in its participation of the Nature of the Divine Being, made Meister Eckhart, the great Dominican scholar burst into a cry, "Oh, wonder of

wonders, when I think of the union the soul has with God! He makes the enraptured soul to flee out of herself, for she is no more satisfied with anything that can be named. The spring of Divine Love flows out of the soul and draws her out of herself into the unnamed Being, into her first source, which is God alone."

How very indispensable is the condition of absolute humility and self-surrender for the flights of mystical experience of the highest order, the friar-preacher of Strassburg, John Tauler makes it clear when he says, everything depends on "a fathomless sinking in a fathomless nothingness." He describes the mystic's union with the Divine as finding himself to be "simply in God."

A devoted follower of Meister Eckhart, the blessed Henry Suso was very susceptible to extraordinary visions. One day he was gripped in an ecstasy which lasted for half an hour to an hour. When heavy with suffering, devoid of all consolation, and in a mood of total surrender, of a sudden ' his soul was rapt in his body, or out of his body; " then did he see and hear that which no tongue can express. Was it day or night? He knew not. "It was, as it were, a manifestation of sweetness of Eternal Life in the sensations of silence and of rest." He said, "If that which I see and feel be not the Kingdom of Heaven, I know not what it can be: for it is very sure that the endurance of all possible pains were but a poor price to pay for the eternal possessions of so great a joy."

He exclaimed, "Oh, my heart's joy, never shall my soul forget this hour!"

Considered as one of the greatest mystics, the blessed John Ruysbroeck has left in his writings such exquisite passages on the true relation of the soul of man with the being of the Divine Lord, as the Heavenly Father "says to each soul in His infinite loving kindness, 'Thou art Mine and I am thine : I am thine and Thou art Mine, for I have chosen thee for all eternity !'"

Known as "the mother of thousands of souls," Saint Catherine of Siena had a peculiar receptivity for the onset of visions and ecstasies. The Voice of the Divine within her deeper Self says, "How glorious is that soul which has indeed been able to pass from the stormy ocean to Me, the Sea Pacific, and in that Sea, which is Myself, to fill the pitcher of her heart." She had had such ecstatic experiences wherein "the hand does not touch and the feet walk not, because the members are bound with the sentiment of Love." A great transformation came upon her, when having heard the Divine Voice say to her, "Now will I wed thy soul, which shall ever be conjoined and united to Me!", she experienced oneness with the Divine, a state of mystic marriage

Another remarkable woman of mystical experience, Saint Catherine of Genoa, would, many times, "hide herself in some secret place and there stay : and being sought she was found upon the ground, her face hidden in her hands, altogether beyond

herself, in such a state of joy as is beyond thought or speech : and being called—yea, even in a loud voice, she heard not." "Sometimes," she says, "I do not see or feel myself to have either soul, body, heart, will or taste, or any other thing except Pure Love."

The founder of the Society of Jesus, Saint Ignatius Loyola, saw in two of his visions, "the most Holy Trinity as it were under the likeness of a triple plectrum or of three spinet keys" and "the Blessed Virgin without distinction of members." George Fox, the founder of the Quakers, had received in his twenty-fourth year, an illumination of the hidden truth of things, a knowledge of the fundamental essence of all that is. He describes, "Now was I come up in spirit through the flaming sword into the Paradise of God. All things were new : and all the creation gave another smell unto me than before, beyond what words can utter .. Great things did the Lord lead me unto, and wonderful depths were opened unto me beyond what can by words be declared; but as people come into subjection to the Spirit of God, and grow up in the image and power of the Almighty, they may receive the word of wisdom that opens all things, and come to know the *hidden unity in the Eternal Being* "

Jacob Boehme was a God-intoxicated man. Even while he was very young, a divine illumination encompassed him ; "he was surrounded by a divine Light for seven days and stood in the highest contemplation and Kingdom of Joy." On a second

occasion he entered into an inward ecstasy as a result of gazing fixedly upon a burnished pewter dish. It seemed to him as if he could look into the very soul of all things. His own statement is that he "looked into the deepest foundations of things." His vision of the transcendental reality informing the heart of the phenomenal world was a frequent experience. He says he "saw and knew the Being of all Beings, the Byss and the Abyss." Delineating the union of the soul with the Godhead, he tells us, "I give you an earthly similitude of this. Behold a bright flaming piece of iron, which of itself is dark and black, and the fire so penetrateth and shineth through the iron, that it giveth light. Now, the iron doth not *cease to be*; it is iron still; and the source (or property) of the fire retaineth its own property; it doth not take the iron into it, but it penetrateth (and shineth) through the iron; and it is iron then as well as before, *free* in itself: and so also is the source or property of the *fire*. In such a manner is the soul in the Deity; the Deity penetrateth through the soul, and dwelleth in the soul, yet the soul doth not comprehend the Deity, but the Deity comprehendeth the soul, but doth not alter it (from being a soul) but only giveth it the divine source (or property) of the Majesty."

80. EXPERIENCES OF JESUS CHRIST

The Gospel according to Saint Mark tells us that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. "And straightaway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him; and there came a voice from heaven, *saying*, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And immediately the spirit driveth him into the wilderness. And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him "

In St. Mathew, chapter seventeen, we read: "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart. And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them and said,

Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man until the Son of man be risen again from the dead."

81. CHRIST-CONSCIOUSNESS

The Golden Key of Divine Wisdom is never found in the unilluminated mortal mind. We discover it only when our consciousness has risen above the unawakened little "I-me-mine" self lost in the dark fog of materialistic values, when our consciousness has become fused with the Light of the Soul.

It is only through the Light of the Soul that we are able to enter into the illuminating Cosmic Awareness, not mere intellectual assent or theory. Once awakened in the Light of the Soul, we behold the same Light everywhere, in all things, whether animate or inanimate, and instead of separative differences, we see, the Eternal Oneness and Sameness behind all evolving entities.

In the light of the transformed consciousness it is realized that we are all of the same immortal divine parentage, that we are all undying golden flames of the same holy, consuming, life-giving fire of the Reality. The all-pervading awareness of the illumined consciousness reveals that centre and periphery, beginning and ending, big and little, gain and loss, are one. It is a spontaneous rhythm that flows of itself in the effortless effort of a calm, waveless, infinite ocean of illumined space, though, at the same time, centred in a profound, inner, all-enveloping, motionless Silence.

In defining the highly abstruse and controversial meaning of Nirvana, the Buddha taught that it is that state wherein "the Self-realization of Noble Wisdom is fully entered into, where the manifestation of the essential and intrinsic oneness of all life through perfect Love expresses itself for the enlightenment of all, where compassion for others transcends all thoughts of self" Christ Himself teaches the same truth when he says that he who loses his life, the fleeting little grasping life of the selfish personality, shall find it in the immortal life of the soul unto Eternity. This Christ-consciousness is achieved through spiritual practices and by living the teachings of Jesus Christ.

(Mark Halpern)

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

82. EXPERIENCES OF MUSILM MYSTICS

The question of perfection of man, according to Muslim mystics might be answered in different ways. In a word, a perfect man may be defined as a man who has fully realised his essential oneness with the Divine Being in whose likeness he is made. The essence of Muslim saintship is nothing less than divine illumination, immediate vision and knowledge of things unseen and unknown, when the veil of sense is suddenly lifted and the conscious self passes away in the overwhelming glory of true Light.

According to the publication titled "Persian Mystics":

"Muslim mystics declare life to be a journey over an unknown path which is as straight and narrow as a razor. There is no other light but that of faith to guide the seeker, no sustenance but devotion. The track ahead cannot be seen, going is uncertain, and pit-falls await the unwary. The seeker must travel in the dark. He must not cry for a candle to grope in the gloom or seek the rush light of reason. He must go steadily forward in the hope reaching a great illumination which awaits him at the journey's end. It would profit little to dwell on the system of Sufism. Volumes have been written in Persian and other languages on the subject. It is not a system really, it is a way of life. It is beyond the range of reason. It cannot be comprehended but it can be realised."

(Dr. M H. Syed;

83. WHY GOD CREATED MAN

(An Anecdote)

Sri Thakur Singhji asked Swamiji "Swamiji ! Why has God created Man ?"

"In order to realise Him," came Swamiji's quick reply.

"If it was to realise God that God created Man, then why did He create Man, separate him from Himself, at all ?"

"That is a transcendental question. It is beyond the power of the little, finite, intellect to understand these transcendental truths. You will have to sell the intellect, purchase intuition, and then you will know the Why of creation—not till then. To ask for an explanation before that is like putting the cart before the horse. You know that somehow you have been created. You are ever hankering after absolute peace, absolute bliss and immortality. You know that these things cannot be had in the finite, perishable objects of this world. They can be had only in God or the Absolute. Even this incessant desire for peace and happiness only indicate that the Self is of the nature of Absolute Peace and Bliss. There is a constant inner urge to know more and more, to live eternally, and to enjoy perpetual happiness. In his ignorance man does not understand that this itself is proof that there is a constant urge in him to

realise the Self, to realise God. That is man's foremost duty. There is no use trying to find an answer to the Why of creation; what is most important is to do something to realise God—and that something is Sadhana.

"But, man does not want to do Sadhana! Most of the people are satisfied with the little objects of the senses. They do not even stop to think what their duty really is—as you have begun to think. They take birth, earn wealth, enjoy and suffer, and then they die. It is only a Viveki who will begin to enquire into the nature of things, and aspire for the Eternal. When that Eternal Truth is realised, this creation appears as the Sport of the Lord. Therefore, in the Brahma Sutras it is declared that the Supreme Being created this universe out of mere sport—with no other motive. It is the Leela of the Lord. Why do they say it is His Leela? It is only to show that it is beyond the grasp of man's little intellect. Do, do, do something to realise the Lord. The heart must expand. Faith must be deep-rooted. People should share what they have with others. The spirit of renunciation must be awakened. All good qualities like compassion, selflessness, egolessness, must be cultivated. Then these Transcendental Questions will be answered—by intuition."

Pradhana is not Brahman When the visitor asked, "Is Pradhana to be taken as Brahman?" Swamiji replied, "No. Pradhana is Prakriti, Avyaktam or Maya. It is not Brahman. Should a Chaprasi be taken as a King?"

84. SEEDS AND FRUITS OF YOGA

Path of Karma Yoga

Selfless work (service of humanity) is the seed. Narayana Bhava (feeling that all creatures are manifestations of the Lord and I am serving Lord in all beings) is the shower. Expansion of the heart is the flower. Purity of the heart is the fruit.

Path of Bhakti Yoga

Devotion is the seed. Faith is the root. Service of Bhagavatas is the shower. Communion with the Lord is the fruit.

Nishtha is the seed. Bhava is the plant. Mahabhava is the flower. Prem or Divine Love for the Lord is the fruit.

Path of Hatha Yoga

Asana (pose) is the seed. Pranayama (restraint of the breath) is the root. Regular practice is the shower. Good health is the flower. One-pointed mind (Ekagrata) is the fruit.

Path of Raja Yoga

Yama (self-restraint), Niyama, etc., are the seeds; Dharana (concentration) is the root. Iswara-pranidhana (self-surrender to the Lord) is the shower. Dhyana (meditation) is the flower. Asamprajnata Samadhi (super-conscious state) is the fruit.

Path of Jnana Yoga

Viveka (discrimination) is the seed. Vairagya (dispassion) is the root. Guru's Grace is the shower. Brahma-Jnana (knowledge of the Self) is the flower. Moksha (liberation) is the fruit.

85. PHILOSOPHICAL TRUTHS

1. Philosophy is the way, not simply of explaining what ought to be, but of directly experiencing that which really *exists*.

2. Philosophy is an examination of the implications of experience.

3. Life is an experience meant to train the individual for a higher, deeper and more expanded state of existence, through the experience of the results of actions.

4. Self-realisation is not the acquirement of something new, but is the discovery of the forgotten Treasure ever present within.

5. Philosophy is the expression of the inner urge to know the Self, to realise what really *is*.

6. Truth is eternal life and existence. Untruth is change, decay and death.

7. Truth is unconditioned by any other experience, save its own.

8. In this universe there is but one Law, the Law of Cause and Effect.

9. The good and evil of this world are the reactions of the wants of individuals.

10. None really loves anything for its own sake but for one's own sake.

11. Life is impossible without death. Death is another aspect of life.

12. Knowledge is not an action. Knowledge is Being.

13. You cannot reach yourself or attain yourself or move towards yourself, except by knowing yourself.

14. There is no matter apart from its qualities, and no mind apart from its functions.

15. There is no such thing as accident or change or fate or luck, except only the results of one's own previous actions.

16. Perception is, in effect, the exhaustion of a desire. Contact is not a method of spending up a desire but a means of speeding it up.

17. All creation is the family of God.

A RENOWNED ARMY OFFICER'S EXPERIENCES

One of the top ranking officers of the Indian Army is also a highly evolved Yogi. He is very, very regular in his meditation and study of scriptures: he used to meditate even on the battle-field. He narrates the following interesting experiences during meditation:

"A short while after I took up the practice of meditation in all earnestness, I had a very strange experience. I always sat for my Dhyān, with my hands on my knees, palms facing upwards, and fingers in *Chin-Mudra*. I invariably found that after a few minutes of meditation, my forearms began to "turn round" so that the palms face downwards and what was more astonishing, one or the other of the arms would slowly flex itself at the elbow, that arm would raise itself, till the palm (with the fingers still in *Chin-mudra*) would almost touch the chest.

"I have heard it said that the Yogi, during meditation, feels light as a feather. The physical feeling of lightness might be caused by the following of phenomenon: during meditation, the back gets straightened up, and the spinal chord inside the spinal column hangs without being unnaturally bent or pressed against the vertebrae. This is bound to give a feeling of lightness. I have always felt that as meditation gets deeper; and deeper, one does

not even wish to breathe. The breath thins out almost imperceptibly. Then I feel as though I am physically lifted up from the ground. I don't disturb myself to ascertain if I am suspended in mid-air. But the following phenomenon makes me feel that perhaps there is an actual levitation. I sit for my Dhyān in a half-Siddhasan posture. Now, after a few minutes of deep meditation I feel that the ankles have parted from each other and that the feet tend to "drop down".

"The third experience is this: what we wish for at certain moments come true. I have experienced this on several occasions, even when very great personalities are concerned, who hold their own opinion strongly. The thought that arises in our mind somehow influences them. I have only one explanation for it. At the moment we are very very close to God. Then the thought arises in our mind. The proximity of God enables the wish to "drop into His Lap," as it were and form part of His Divine Will. Then His Will works itself out: and our wish is automatically fulfilled, without our striving for it even mentally. The Yogi at this moment does *not* want to influence anyone, does not even want his prayer to be heard by God. He merely wishes it, and the wish is 'taken over' by Him as part of His Will.

INSPIRING LETTERS OF SIVANANDA



INSPIRING LETTERS OF SIVANANDA

1. EQUIPMENT FOR REALISATION

1st January 1957

Sri R.T. Werther,
Perth, Australia

Self-discipline, self-restraint, self abnegation, determination and courage of high order are needed to equip one for the attainment of Self-realization.

In stillness or inner poise you get flashes of illumination or glimpses of Truth or Consciousness of Lord's Holy Presence.

Meditate regularly and rigorously. Greater light will be drawn from Para Brahman or the Absolute.

May Lord bless you.

Thy own Atma,
Sivananda.

2 GLORY OF MEDITATION.

1st February 1957

Sri Sivananda-Kumudini,
Hyderabad
Blessed Divinity,

Meditate "I am all-pervading Atma" and get yourself renewed and revitalized by the soul-power.

Meditation will release a power that will revitalize and energize your entire being.

Meditate. Realize. Live carefree, blissfully, joyfully and peacefully. May Lord bless you.

Sivananda.

3. VISION OF A VEDANTIN

Sri Mrs. Hanna Herrmann,
Winterthur, Switzerland.

1st March 1957

Glorious, Immortal Atman,

You are a Vedantin. You are a Jnana Yogini. Vedanta is the Science of sciences. It transforms one into a sage.

The seer sees not death, nor disease, nor any distress. He sees only the one, Immortal Atman everywhere.

Atman is the Substratum, Subject and Sakshi or Witness. You cannot see the seer of seeing. Become a seer, O Hanna!

May Lord bless you.

Sivananda.

4. WHO IS A SAGE

Sri Sivananda-Vani,
New Delhi.

1st April 1957

Nectar's Child,

He whose craving is annihilated is a calm sage. He who is free from anger, lust, greed, egoism and jealousy is indeed a sage.

He who calls nothing in this world as his own, who is not elated by success or gain, who is not depressed by failure or loss is a sage.

He who does not crave for sensual pleasures, who is independent is a sage. May you become a sage, O Vani!

Sivananda

5. PEACE

1st May 19.7

Sri Sylvia Heck (Sivananda-Sushila),
Montreal.

Child of Immortality,

Peace is the happy natural state of man. It is his birthright War is his corruption, his disgrace, his shame.

Peace is a precious jewel It is a priceless treasure. Peace is the very nature of the Soul or Atma.

The peace of God fills your heart. Realize this supreme Peace through meditation and devotion.

May Lord bless you.

Sivananda.

6. LOVE

1st June 1957

Dr. Sivaranda-Sundari,
Tinnevely.

Blessed Immortal Atman,

Pure, unselfish love is divine Prem It is sublime. It thinks of no evil to anybody. It envies not It revenges not. It resents not. It bargains not. It ever gives and gives. It endures.

Love is God. This pure love never fails. It seeks not its own. It unites one with God.

May you attain God-realization now and here.

Sivananda.

7. RIDDLES

1st July 1957

Children Bharathi and Vijaya,
Sivananda Griha,
Hyderabad.

Blessed Children,

You like riddles. Here are two riddles for you.
"I am a Messenger from God. I come to teach you.
love you. But you hate me. Who am I?"

Pain.

"You pray for me, but when I come, you run
away from me. Who am I?"

Rain.

May God bless you.

Sivananda.

8. INGREDIENTS OF WISDOM

1st August 1957

Sri Sivananda-Sobha,
Bareilly.

Adorable Atman.

Wisdom alone can give you liberation. "I am all-
pervading, immortal Atman" This is wisdom.

Wisdom has the following ingredients, viz., to-
lerance, patience, kindness, generosity, humility,
unselfishness, quilelessness, sincerity, serenity,
courage, peace, purity, self-restraint, self-denial,
discrimination and dispassion.

May you attain wisdom,

Sivan

9. MESSAGE OF HOPE

1st September 1957

Sri Dr. Devaki Kutty, M. R. C. O. G.,
Lucknow.

Glorious Atman,

Difficulties and troubles will help you in developing your will and power of endurance. Be courageous.

You are born for higher things. A glorious brilliant future is awaiting you. March forward. Find thy rest in the Supreme soul. Draw strength from within. Feel the Divine Presence everywhere. Dive deep into the Divine Source. Realize the Infinite Bliss.

May Lord bless you.

Sivananda

10. DIVINE LIFE

Sri Elumalai,
Madras.

1st October 1957

Blessed Self,

Live in God. Take refuge in the Lord. Meditate on the Lord. Surrender completely to the Lord. Fix your mind on Him. Sing His names. Work for Him. See Him in all faces.

Lay bare your heart to Him. Talk to Him like a child. Be humble and simple. Rely on Him alone. Be regular in doing Japa. You will soon attain God-realization.

May Lord bless you.

Sivananda

11. THE FLAME DIVINE

1st November 1957

Sri Sivananda-Pushpa, M. A.,
Dehra Dun

Glorious Effulgence,

Kindle the divine flame in your heart. Let it burn brightly. Strengthen your spiritual personality by constant prayer, meditation, Kirtan and selfless service.

Act now. Live now. Know now. Meditate now. Realize now. Be happy now, O Pushpa "dust,"

May Lord bless you.

Sivananda.

12. BECOME A YOGI

1st December 1957

Sri Col Rikhy,
Roorkee.

Compassionate Dr. Atman,

Yoga is an attempt to grow into the divine nature.

The practice of Yoga quickens the evolution of man. It bestows immortality, eternal bliss and everlasting peace.

Here is a great field for you to practise Seva, Yoga and attain God-realization quickly.

Practise Yoga vigorously. D. I. N., and become a Yogi.

May Lord bless you.

Sivananda

STORY OF SIVANANDA

Words cannot express my joy in having received a gracious note from Swamiji, the Gurudev. I was immensely delighted to read each word of that valuable writing and I undertake to abide by the instructions therein. I have no doubt that the noble advice will have a very wholesome influence on my life and I thank Swamiji sincerely. Swamiji's books are being read by me regularly, and I feel that they help, to a considerable extent, to increase my spiritual dimensions. I feel a change in my life and I fully believe that it is inspired by the valuable books that I receive from Swamiji, from time to time. May Yoga-Vedanta Forest University serve to lift the veil of darkness from the face of this world which is at present in a bad way. The light from the mighty Himalayas alone is the hope of this atomic age.

—S. Kunchu Pillai, B.A.L.T.,
Head Master,
High School, PRAYAR,
Oachira.

Please accept my deepest appreciation for the packet of books which you recently sent. It is a great pleasure to read your words so filled with wisdom and divine love. It is so beautiful to see the spirit of God flowing through the various channels which have tapped the infinite reservoir of His Being.

I offer my humble Pranams to Thee in recognition of thy great mission on earth. If it is the will of the Divine Mother, I hope to visit India in the not-too-distant-future. If I do, I hope to have the opportunity to meet Thy Holy Self, as it was the wish of my beloved Gurudev to do so.

May the Divine Mother grant unto you and your work all manifestation of goodness and divine fulfillment. As you are ever in Her love, may that divine blessing be felt by all who look to thee for spiritual succour.

—Sister Daya.

President, Self-realisation Fellowship
Los Angeles,
California—USA

"Swami Sivananda is a Maha Jnani, humble saint, and true Karma Yogi. His Ashram at Rishikesh is an institute of Seva (Service) and Bhakti. Swami Sivananda has written innumerable books and has influenced thousands of people."

"Swami Sivananda has commented on 18 Chapters of Gita. Along with Shlokas in Sanskrit, he has given the Shloka in English also, so that one could read Sanskrit with ease. Translation of the Shloka is also given. Swamiji has explained the Shlokas in easy language. The price of the book has been kept low so that many people can purchase and read it"

—Review of Shrimad Bhagavad Gita by
Swami Sivananda, appearing in a
daily of Bombay.

I thank you for the three books you have kindly sent me and for writing your name in 'Yoga Samhita'. I am glad you are surrounded with so much music. It is one of the most precious things that God has given to man. I hope that many, through you, will come to know the Lord Jesus and His matchless teachings and His amazing sacrifice of Himself, for us, on the Cross.

—Bishop H. Pakenham-Walsh,
Christa Sishya Ashram,
Tadaqam P.O.
Coimbatore R.S.P.

With immense joy we have received the three books of Swami Sivananda: Yoga Samhita; Life of Sivananda—A song; and Sivananda Day-to-Day Vol. XXII, kindly despatched by you.

Your holy pen is always wisdom, inspiring and illuminating. Really you are a divine miracle in yourself to produce books after books in succession without a cessation. They are indeed perennial and perpetual.

Swami Rajeswarananda.
Upanishad Vihar,
MADRAS-23

My heart is too full to express any feelings. You know them already. It was almost impossible to tear myself away from you this time.

Maj. Gen. A.N. Sharma.
DEHRA DUN.

The Sivananda Art Studio has done a good work and certainly it is very energetic and hard-working.

Maj Gen Yadunath Singh,
Military Secretary to President,
New Delhi.

Your Holiness,

I am grateful to you for very kind letters and for the concern you have expressed for the health of my wife. Your elevating messages and gracious interest in our health are a source of great strength to us and we hope that we will continue to enjoy and be benefited by your blessings.

Yours devoted,
S. Fazl Ali,
Governor of Assam.

I enjoyed my trip to the Ashram very much and have learnt quite a lot; this is due to Thy Grace.

Sivananda Bhicka Chiba,
PRETORIA..... S.A.

You are always in my thoughts. I am very happy and lucky to have met you and received your blessings. I enjoyed my visit to your Ashram very much. I have been telling my parents all about you. They are very anxious to come over there and have your Darshan.

Hamsa Krishnan,
Kilpauk, Madras.

I have no words to express my bliss as well as gratitude for so affectionate, benevolent and what

not for the Grace dawned upon me in my last visit to Ananda Kutir that is Abode of Bliss. I shall ever cherish this occasion and moments in my life which have helped me to feel proud of being recipient of your kind benedictions, affections and grace.

I humbly request that you may please let me swing in Thy thoughts and let those reach me every day, now and then, through Cosmic vibrations.

It was really a wonder and surprise to me that while I had simply gone to appraise you of success in written papers of my son and seeking Thy Grace at my son's interview, I was returned so loaded and honoured.

Bishan Lal Kthiala, B A., LL B.
Canal, Jammy Tawi.

It is amazing how more and more people are getting interested in your work. So many of your books are all the time taken out of our library. We always think of you, and my students and friends draw great inspiration from your illuminating writings.

My wife joins me in sending you our deepest regards,

Devotedly yours,

Haridas Chouduri,
President, Cultural Integration
Fellowship,
San Fransisco, California.

We offer our respectful regards and extreme gratitude for giving us the opportunity of visiting the Ashram and meeting You... now our attach-

ment to Your beautiful Abode of Peace and quiet.....

Now that we have stayed there we realise what we have missed in our life all along..... We hope and pray that we have the good fortune of Your blessings and with that strange and loving inner voice can become closer and closer to You and through You to God. Please bless us both—that is all we seek

Rajinder & Kanta,

Principal

Punjab Engr. College,
Chandigarh,

Thy divine letter speaks but of pure Divinity with kindest thoughts. It is a great relief especially to an eager Home-sick Child of Thine !

The prompt returning of the Certificate with Thy sweet Signature speaks of Thy smartly business-like habit. How much Thou teacheth even at this state of health. Who else would do so much for us—my heart moistens indeed to think of it. OM

Infinite has been Thy Grace on this humble servant, who remains bowed in deep reverence and gratitude.

Swami Shantananda

Sat Sanga Kendra,

Daryaganj, Delhi.

This time last year I was in exuberant Joy over the welcome and the unfailing generous treatment that I received at your hands.....

K.S. Subramaniam,

Dombivli, (C. Rly) Via Kalyan.

When I came to the Ashram last time, Swamiji gave me plenty of sweetmeats, and I ate them, but there was no need for me to take any insulin injection, as there was no sugar in the urine. After my return home, although I abstained from taking sweet things, I had to take recourse to insulin injections, as my urine contained a small percentage of sugar! Such is the divine power of Swamiji's Prasad!

Dr. D.K. Viswanathan,
Malaria Adviser, World Health
Organisation, New Delhi.

I cannot express my greatititude for thy two letters. Thy great kindness touched me to the core of my heart. Tears are in my eyes as I write, so unworthy do I feel-so full of overwhelming love for Thee, my revered Guruji. My joy and gratitude knew no bounds.

My most beloved and adorable Lord, I am immeasurably happy to be Thy Disciple. I feel so safe in thy care and will try my utmost to be worthy. It is such a wonderful privilege to be Thy disciple. I am fully aware of the almost limitless responsibility incurred by the Guru for the disciple and so I deeply appreciate Thy immeasurable kindness and compassion in guiding one so weak as I.....the constant awareness of Thy Presence gives me consolation in failure and courage to carry on.

—Lorna Retif,
Johannesburg —SA

I bow with deep love at thy lotus-feet. I was quite overwhelmed when I received Thy lovely letter, so full of blessings and so graciously written by Thy own hand. How can I ever thank Thee for Thy kindness and for the honour Thou hast so graciously bestowed upon me.....

I regard it as a very great blessing that Thou hast bestowed Thy name on me. Words cannot express the gratitude I feel that Thou hast taken me under Thy benign care and protection, that I have Thee to guide me on this razor-edged path. I bow at Thy Lotus-Foot in deep devotion and Eternal Gratitude.

In one of your letters you said 'The Lord works in a mysterious way'; so I tried to surrender completely and prayed for light and guidance.....Then the miracle occurred, due, I know, to thy Grace and to Thy great kindness in conducting prayers for me, which I appreciate beyond measure. For two days I was mysteriously guided in that I had no control over events.....

—LORNA RETIF

JOHANNESBURG (S. Africa).

Again and again I thank Thee for thy kind help. I have ever been conscious of Thy Presence on many occasions since I last wrote...While writing this I feel peace, I know thou art ever with me, beloved Guruji, Thy lovely letter just received brought with it such a blessing. How can I ever thank thee? My love for Thee grows stronger. Beloved Gurudev, I bow at Thy Feet.

I was so happy to read Thy words that 'many more will soon come under the fold,' for I know whatever you say will come to pass. Due to Thy Grace the Centre is already having a peaceful atmosphere..... the newcomers remark on this.....while meditating on thy photo in the mornings, thy grace passes through me.....

—Lorna Retlif,
Johannesburg, SA.

I received your most unexpected letter and the last paragraph which read: "kindly write to me unhesitatingly", gave me a little courage to write this letter to you.

I feel terribly out of place to write to a Great Guru who has stepped on to the topmost rung of the spiritual ladder while I find it so difficult to place my foot on the first rung.

—N. Satchidanandan,
Natal, S. Africa.

I have received your letter of the 17th ultimo and am trying to drink the nectar of your kind message from time to time. I pray-God He will give me the 'Shakti' to absorb them.

—Topandas Kimatrai,
Dar-Es-Salaam.

Thank you very very much for your dear letter and for the most valuable package of books, this bundle of love and wisdom. How can we ever thank you enough for all your goodness and patience. The books are all exceedingly interesting and inspiring,

giving many directions on Divine Life and a truly intimate picture of Your Holiness and your admired disciples. Which of the books should we read first... all of them interest us very much, give ample material for study and advice for practical performance.

—Dr. Otto Greanicher,
Zurich, Switzerland.

Every thing in praise of Your wonderful books has already been said and I do perfectly agree with everything thus spoken and one thing: I am a very good receiver of that dynamism that radiates from Your books and which I have recently been very much in want of and also found in the little book:

"Sivananda, Day-to-day"

This deep reflexion from You is an invaluable help for me as a teacher, I hope you understand me...

—Edith Enna,
Yoga Institute,
Copenhagen, Denmark.

Reading your books and booklets in the last 2 years and your instructions, I could make very good progress in Raja Yoga and could with your help make success in spiritual practices. Brahman gave you, my dear Guru, to me to lead me on the Path of Self-realisation.

F. Weinhofen,
Berlin, Germany

May I address Thee, Gurudev, in the words of Arjuna to Sri Krishna :

Ignorant of this Greatness of Yours,
Addressing Thee 'wantonly'... merely as

Friend, or heedlessly in playfulness

I crave Your Forgiveness...

In this very beginner state of Occidental
sheathings.

How very beautiful Thy Para Puja 'worship-prayer in the forepart of the Pranayama Book! It is delightful. Also, the clarity and simplicity of Your treatment of Yoga and Pranayama, in books, is a most welcome contrast to the usual mystifying material encountered.....Waves upon waves of supporting strength have seemed to be flooding forth from Thee, lifting, 'dark obscurement from my mind.'

L.D. Stein,

Stinson Beach, California

Your Divine SADHANA is always a source of Bliss when I am thinking of it. The sure confident faith with which you are trusting in God alone is the life-saving bridge on which I swing myself to surpass all the turmoiling whirlpools of Tantric Sadhana...I am now a pupil of yours for about seven years. In your book: Spiritual Lessons—Pt. II you write on page 2 that you give six years spiritual course for aspirants for Self-realisation. I just begin to understand you as you ought to be understood! Kindly allow me to remain your obedient pupil for another course of six years! Nay, throughout my life. It will be "LIFE FOR SIVANANDA," verily! My soul clings to you and my heart knows and feels that you are guiding me to the Lord. That is your Priesthood which my whole being is recognising. I am thanking you ever and ever for being so kind to me.

My heart is incessantly living in your Divine Presence. United with your holiness' Guru Shakti, I am adoring your "Helping Hand" and the wonder of thought-transference.

Hilde Friebel-Sivananda
Germany.

Dear Master, I am so very thankful for your being here among mankind, for your great spiritual help to mankind and for all that you do for everybody of us.

Ines Spring,
Switzerland.

My love to serve you is greater than God-realisation itself.....

A.C. Avudayappan,
N. Pudur, Karaikudi.

With great joy I received your letter, which gave again a lot of force and help.....

In You I see the Lord.

Friedel Bosshard,
Winterthur, Switzerland.

My deepest gratitude to your loving care one who dares not call herself as your Chela.....I have just received the joy of more books from your kindness universal. I wish I were fully worthy of such treasures, also of such guidance as you may think of sending me...I am full of faith in all you say, because your teachings go straight to the heart...I want to be led by your strong and loving hand, a

hand that impresses me as being that of a super-Being.

Dear Master of Masters! You are such a one to me. I had from time to time written to one or the other of the Masters in the East, but never was answered at all! I had begun to think I was not the least worthy of the attention of any of the Masters, until I wrote to you and was answered, at last, and with such kind-heartedness! Letters, I now have learned to look upon you with confidence and hope, also joy.....I was feeling forsaken of men and gods; You echoed my prayers, which returned charged with blessings...Thank you.

Margelite B. Stassopoullou,
Famagusta—Cyprus

Since last year I was not getting any co-operation from my father who has got a business in Hong Kong and Japan; so finally I decided that I will not demand anything from him and I will go and serve someone in Hong Kong. I was in the house for three months without doing anything.....But how could I explain to you that with the blessings of your kind heart I succeeded in getting job over here. Now I am working here.....Pranams.

—H.S. Dayaram,
Hong Kong.

I am reading your beautiful messages in the "Synthese Universelle"—Geneva.

—Madame Olga Dussex
Sion Suisse

Rishikesh with you is really a place that attracts one's soul irresistibly, as it is a place of rest and peace.

—H. Zecha,

Djakarta—Indonesia

Many many heartfelt thanks for thy kind gift of books and Prasad which are at once elevating and lifting. The book: *Sivananda Day-to-day* is most appealing and resolves many spiritual doubts which can't be cleared from any books. Its value is inestimable.

—G.S. Bhalla,

New Delhi

Divine Life is in my blood and bones. Wherever I go I must take part in religious activities. This is the result of Thy Grace and Mercy.

Sivananda-Botèju

Kuala Lumpur, Malaya

Your most encouraging words and your blessings have done much good to me, and my family members too. By your grace, I am trying to become good, and am putting before my friends your writings in English and Gujarati translations.

—K.H. Gadhvi.

East Africa.

I have had the great pleasure of receiving a few volumes of your famous books. I value your books and therefore I would appreciate it very much if you send some to a friend of mine in South America.

I wish to help spreading out your glorious ideas
for the spiritual uplift of mankind in South America.

—Prof Dr. F. Wichtermann
Switzerland

The Holy Temple of Ananda Kutir at the foot of the Himalayas and on the banks of the Ganges created by Sri Swami Sivananda is a jewel of Love and Inspiration of the God-in-man for promoting non-violence on earth. Here everybody is welcome and is blessed by him without distinctions of race, colour and creeds. All are humble and Godlike. His humility is his simplicity. Simple as were all past Idols on earth like Buddha, Christ, Jehova and a very few that you know by names. Here is Truth, Light, Power and perfection, in mind, body and soul. Mediator between heaven and earth, receives at first hand the Voice of our High God. The Light of this Ashram is in continuous splendour and illumines by Goodness to all neighbours the world over.

Carlos R. Da Silva,
Lisbon, Portugal.

Thanks for the wonderful New Year Folder with the photograph of "One Who Looks Through everything" and the inspiring poem.

Galitzine,
Ottawa 2, Ontario, Canada

How many times do I remember Thee in a day I can't tell. Thy ever-flowing kindness and blessings have moved my heart. Now I keep a framed

picture of Thee in my altar and worship Thee with fresh flowers, morning and evening.

Thy books are my companions now. I prefer to sit at home and read or do mental Japa. Swamiji's book: *Music as Yoga* is simply wonderful. I am not a musician but still when I read Thy elaborate divine scientific explanation on real music, I feel as if I am in Vaikuntha or Brindavan.....How my heart yearns to hear Sri Swamiji's sweet, majestic, soul-elevating songs, which is nectar itself.....The 8th of every month is very important to me, since the 8th of September last.....Through Thy infinite Grace, I am able to do my worship, Japa, meditation, etc., regularly.

(Sd) Mrs. Senah,
Penang—Malaya

Your Holiness' letter of the Feb, 19th. It came when it was most needed.....since I came to know Your Holiness two years ago and follow your sacred Teachings, everything in my life changed for the better.....How is it so?.....Had it not been for Your Holiness' beneficial influence, things would have turned for the worst.....Now since I received your last letter, everything is heading again for normal.....O Most revered Gurudev, don't ever forget me in Your Holiness' Prayers.....Herewith a donation, to keep the perennial stream of wisdom ever flowing for the enlightenment of suffering humanity.

Susano Ortiz,
Puerto Rico

Thanks for the books and the letters—so loving and encouraging as if you did know. I just had to pass through these trials.....The mere thought of you fills me with Prem and warmth of the Spiritual Sun. O master, bless me with Thy Guidance.....

Agnete Havmoller
Denmark

.....naturally, receiving a copy of the Bhagavad, Gita edited by you, gave me a great joy.

I am very happy to know that so much good work is being done by your movement, and I am confident that the efforts of thousands today to live a spiritual life and the prayers of so many spiritually-minded men and woman will help transform this world into a better place to live.

A. Borchart,
Buenos Aires,

I have read thy very kind letter very carefully and have sucked the juice out of it. I felt joy when I had it in hand. I could not believe it was from you. I am glad that the Father has not forgotten his children.

I am very glad that Thou personally have taken interest in me. I am very lucky to have come under a Guru like Thee. The letter had a nice photo of Yours in it and it spreads the Light upon all of us here.

Shakti Prasad,
Suva, Fiji,

I am now the happy recipient of both your post and literature, which are inspiring. Going through the lectures, I can form very good opinions of your most valuable work to mankind. God be with you.

George A. Doris,
British Guiana, S. America.

Your letter has given me a real pleasure. This is real encouragement to me and to my work. The day I get a letter from You will be a day of festivity and joy. Through Your intervention, I made the acquaintance with Sri Sivananda-Isabella..... and the Sivananda Circle.

Your last letter, has touched my inner self. All Your letters are so wonderful and bring me so much satisfaction, bliss, joy and happiness. You know all that is bringing me pain and grief. After I have read it I knew that I must work to become better and more tolerant.....I find in Your Teachings and in Your books so much comfort.....I dreamed that You visited us, dear Guruji.....I presume it was the new flat and You were standing near the window and I was complaining about my difficulties and You began to pary in a language unkown to me. But I felt peace and rest. Then came my son and scolded me that I did not invite You to live with us and that You have to stay in the flat of our neighbours. The dream brought me comfort and force to bear all the troubles. Please do pray for all of us.

B. Mazliachova,
Praha.

About the seventh of each month, I always feel the uplifting presence.

—V. Rinz Anderson,
Denmark (Europe).

I believe that you create the situation very good for the disciple. On 25 Feb. during the morning meditation, I saw your marvellous face with an unforgettable look. It stood in my heart and was so little as my eye-balls, but much alive.

—Barbara Mayer,
Germany.

I have seen Thee in my vision and often in my dream; I am counting my days when I can have Thy Darshan. You are a Sage of sympathetic and loving heart. Your glorious work cannot be expressed in words. Your books and your teachings have impressed me and I would like to be in close touch with you..... Only a sacred letter from you can give much of relief and happiness.

—Kamachee Swaminathan,
Pietermaritzburg, Natal, S.A.

I thank you very much for your very kind letter of the 19th Feb., I will read it every day.

Besides your photo there are standing the first flowers of this year: Primroses, Daphne, and Lung-flowers. And you look so lovely and your eyes shine into my heart ...

—Dorothy Mathias,
Deutschland, Germany.

...You wrote to me when in Bhai and presented me two copies of your books which has developed my psychic powers...

—Rev. Jean E. Okoro,
Religious Sanctuary,
Nigeria, W. Africa.

How grateful I am for thy kind letter... the photograph is beautiful, words fail me... Thank you very much. It accompanies me wherever I go. Sometimes I cannot tear my eyes away from it. There are times when I run my fingers over it and try and feel Thy Presence. I love Thee so much.

Thy little book: 'Light, Power and Wisdom' is so compact, dynamic and powerful...

But, beloved Master, when I read about Thee, hear about Thee and look at Thy lovely face, I become so exalted, I feel as though I could choke. When I received Thy last letter, for three days I had the most wonderful feeling of protection, knowing that You are standing by us and guiding us...

—Pat Peterson,
Johannesburg.

Four years ago I wrote to You: "How wonderfully You express Yourself. I am filled with profound respect and gratitude." What else can I say now about Your latest book which has reached me! "The Voice of Sivananda"—what a wonderful example, what overwhelming evidence of the roar of the lion getting stronger even as he grows older! My heart-

felt thanks to You for the sublime spiritual philosophy which IS YOU in thought, word and deed !

—A. Simon, Dr.,
Johannesburg, S.A.

Thank you for your welcome and heart-warming letter with its wonderful contents accepting me not only as your student but as your disciple, as well. I could not wish for more. My heart is filled to overflowing with gratitude and I am grateful to they who have led me to your door and to you for opening it to me and bidding me to enter through it. It is as if God Himself, has taken me back to the path, again now, through you..... with your acceptance of me, I feel that my prayers are being answered and once I enter your doors, I will never go off the right road again.

.....Joining you is my heart's greatest desire.

—Florence Anson,
Venezuela, South America.

You are a reviver of real and true religion...The best day in my life was when I started Yoga after Your advice...

Eyvind Kulsrud
—Oslo N.V., Norway

I have to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your 'telepathic prayers' which cured the excruciating pain of my religious brother, Satiah Somanah. I knew that your Divine Prayers work

wonders.....You are the visible God for the humanity.....

T. Somanah,
Mahaburg, Mauritius.

I am reading your books at present and I cannot explain how they are changing my thoughts. Your books have really opened my eyes.

N.W. Saraf,
West Germany

I thank you very much for your kind Yoga Instruction to me during my stay in your Ashram.

Since I came back to my country, I am studying your instruction as my lesson.

Sakae Kanematsu
Yokohama-Japan

I am deeply moved by your generosity and the trust you put in me; and your words "Gurù is God Visible on earth" were the subject of my morning meditation. Thanks for all the tender care and I surely try to follow all your advices.

Margaret Beatrice Stassopoullo,
Famagusta, Cyprus.

I thank you very very much for the kindness which you showed me by sending me your brochures and letters and by the telepathic assistance which sometimes entered my conscience so that I was aware of it.

You answered questions which I only thought.....

I bow before the Voice of the Lord speaking to the world through you.....

Johann Franz
Austria.....

Thank you for the two little books you sent me; they are *priceless*; I say *priceless* because in the short time I have been reading them they have done so much to help me. Once again may I thank you for sending me the little 'jewels'.

Sheila Stedman Ph. D., B. A.
Durban, S.A.

Since the correspondence with you, my work goes on more easily; personally I am more quite

Mrs. W. L. Bezemer,
Amsterdam, Netherland.

My brother is getting better from the 12th Feb., a change took place...he is quite and not suffering any more...how wonderful it is, and I am so grateful to you...How beautiful of you to conduct a special prayer for him... I am sure that is what made the change.....he had been hovering between life and death, but now he is quite clear and calm.

Signe Aagaard,
Copenhagen, Denmark

With deepest gratitude and humility I want to thank Swamiji for the kind and encouraging letter. The little bit achieved has been achieved through Swamiji's Grace. My beloved Father has changed my whole life. How one ever has been able to live without Thee, is a riddle for me. Thanks for all

the wise and wonderful words in connection with the racial question....We all have learned to look upon the Ashram as our spiritual home.

Albrecht Lewald,
Pretoria-S A.

In the Forest University Weekly, I have been much helped by reading "Sivananda Day-to-day" in the issue of Dec. 30 1956...Your answers to aspirants' questions are most instructive...I marvel at the work you get through.

John M. Short,
Australia

I address you in the names of the Trinity, the Holy Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God. Amen.

I am an African, but I had long felt the urge to tell you in writing how much inspiration I have received from reading your inspiring books, especially those on Yoga as well as others containing the formulas for success and God-realisation. Your annual Christmas Message published here is always an ideal spiritual food.

—Rev. Sabre Sellassie,
British Guiana

I do most deeply appreciate your goodness in remembering one like myself, who is but an infant on the Path,... You are in the mighty Himalayas; I am in Southern California—yet, something tells me that distance is no barrier to the soul. The influence of a Holy person like yourself, Swamiji,

and Your inspiring thoughts, directed towards me, will surely help me in climbing the ladder towards God-realisation.....one loving thought from your Holy Self can be my lamp, to guide me.....with deep devotion, I remain.

—Charles D Kelley,
California, USA

Your love did I understand only when you appeared to me three times and the third time you touched my forehead and throat and my head-aches disappeared and I have a better memory....

—Bozena Cechove,
Czechoslovakia

Revered Swamiji. It is now one year since we surrendered unto Thy Feet. ...Thy Grace alone has sustained us. Ever since our surrender there is peace and harmony in the family. Everyone is cheerful and happy, ever repeating the sweet name of Lord Sivananda. Really Swamiji has brought light into our home. May Thou ever guide us on the path of spiritual life. May our devotion ever increase to the One Lord Sivananda.....

—Venkatswamy Naicker,
Durban

I was especially touched by Your picture (appearing on the Srimad Bhagavad Gita).

—Vinia White,
Sydney, Australia

My Magician Gurudev ! Your miraculous powers are really wonderful ! My Master's remarkable Powers can change stone into gold and gold into stone It is all your Grace, my Swamiji.

My Lord and my Master, I can see you here every day. Your Seva, Your Glories are my only joy.....

—Sri Vani Bhai Ram,
New Delhi.

Many thanks for conducting prayers for our welfare... .. Sri Swamiji's blessings are more than all the Temple Prayers. We have nothing to fear... ..

Received that parcel of Sweet Halva Prasad.... How kind my Master is ! Swamiji cannot forget his devotees even for a moment.

Smt Varalakshmi is almost all right now. She has seen Swamiji Maharaj only once—last year and she has dreaming only about Guru Dev ! All Swamiji's Miracles...Wonderful !

—Sivananda-Vani,
New Delhi.

Swamiji, what shall I say about the experiences I am having ! All wonderful !! After my office-work daily my mind flies to Ananda Kutir and I am at Swamiji's sweet divine feet ! Sometimes I see my Gurudev walking where I am sitting. I can see Swamiji in various pcses (forms) By the time I want to feel it is all real, my dream ends and I only realise it was all my imagination ! Ah, I talk so freely to Swamiji. I put so many questions to him.

He graciously solves all my problems. How beautiful!

Dasi Sivananda-Vani,
New Delhi.

While I was reading Karma Yoga in Bhagavad Gita, the following sentence in one of your letters came to my mind, "Give your hands to work and mind to God." I was awe-struck. How beautifully you have given the essence of Karma Yoga in such brevity and simplicity! A small line could contain so much.

A.C. Avudayappan,
Karaikudi.

Your kind letter is so nicely worded that I feel delicate to express my heartfelt gratitude for all the morals it contains. Your instructions are a great backing to all the failures which one expects to encounter on the way.

I have re-read the same for about half a dozen times.

G. S. Panda,
District Veterinary Officer,
Koraput.

I am most delighted for having had the good fortune to be in the midst of today's prayer-meeting. The calm and serene atmosphere which is an ever-present reality here (in Sivanandashram) has thrilled

me. I wish this righteous cause success and on my part I shall carry happy memory to the South.

Venkateswaran,

B.A., G.D.A., C.A.I.I.B.,

Cement Marketing, Co. of India Ltd,
Coimbatore.

Permit us to express our grateful thanks for the very kind treatment and honour conferred on Sow. Nirmala. We wish and pray that we could imbibe a little of that great love and goodness that we felt emanated from your holy self towards us while in your presence.

M.H. Viswanathan,
Madras

How I wish that before going to give the papers I could just touch Gurudev's holy feet and give my exams. with full confidence. I am sure Gurudev's blessings are always with me.

Mohini Ram,
Lucknow.

Today is Siva Ratri. The whole day I was thinking of your Holy self and of your holy Ananda Kutir. Mentally I could not leave you for a moment.

Kindly take me in your shelter and let me have the best use of this human birth. I believe you will enable me and guide me to walk correctly in this Divine Path. Your holy letters give me life. Without them I become lifeless.

Sivananda Sushila Kamboj, M. A. B. Mu.
Banaras.

... as is natural, the monetary resources of the Ashram Society have not been able to keep pace with the generosity of His Holiness—our Gurudev. Bhagavan

What strikes me most is the kindness of Sri Gurudev in providing His devotees with such opportunity to render some little service to the great cause of the Society.

Ex-Major, Pindi Das,
Annapurna Farms,
PAWAI

Your blessings are doing me a great good, which I experience daily. I do not see any need for expressing thanks to you, as a child does not thank his father for the guidance. I can see blessings from Sri Gurudev being showered incessantly.

Your letter has given me great enlightenment.

Rambhai D. Patel
Mombasa, Kenya Col.

.....In You my son, Sri Sagar Chand Gupta, found a perfect Man.....between God and Perfect Man there is hardly any difference.

Sadhu Ram Gupta,
Rohtak.

"THE KITCHEN OF SIVANANDASHRAM IS
COSMIC LOVE IN ACTION," IS THE FEEL-
ING OF EVERY SINCERE ASPIRANT
WHO VISITS THE ASHRAM.

OVER THREE HUNDRED PERSONS

Resident-Sadhaks, Sadhus, poor people
and pilgrims are given food and tea
every day, besides a floating popula-
tion of about 50 casual visitors.

The monthly expenditure amounts to :—

TWELVE THOUSAND RUPEES

*Generous devotees could make a regular
contribution towards the maintenance
of one Sadhaka : Rs. 30 per month.*

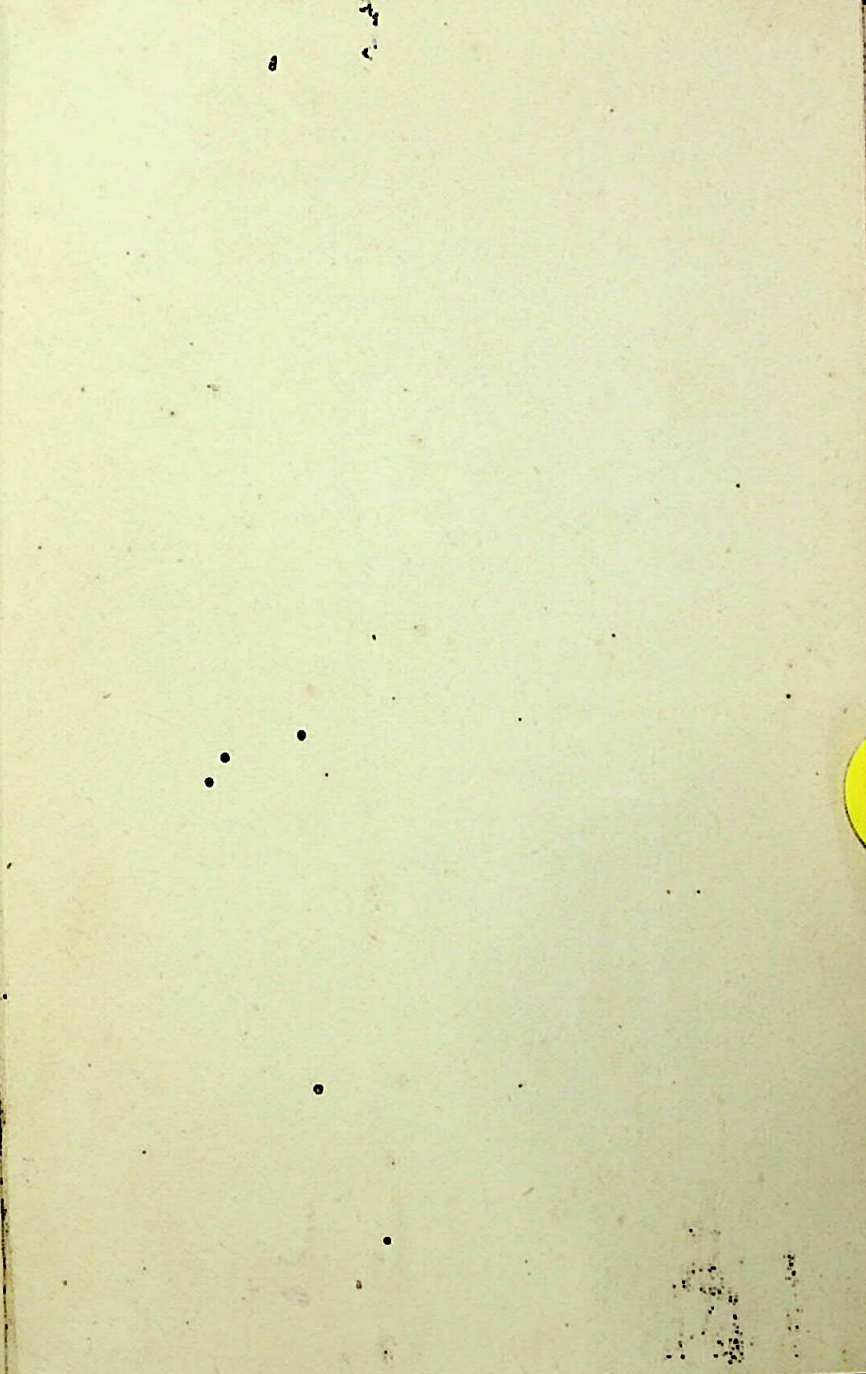
Voluntary contributions towards the
maintenance of the ANNAKSHETRA
are welcome.

Contributions may be in cash or in
kind, e.g., rice, dhal, pepper, atta,
sugar, kerosene, soap, cloth, etc., etc.

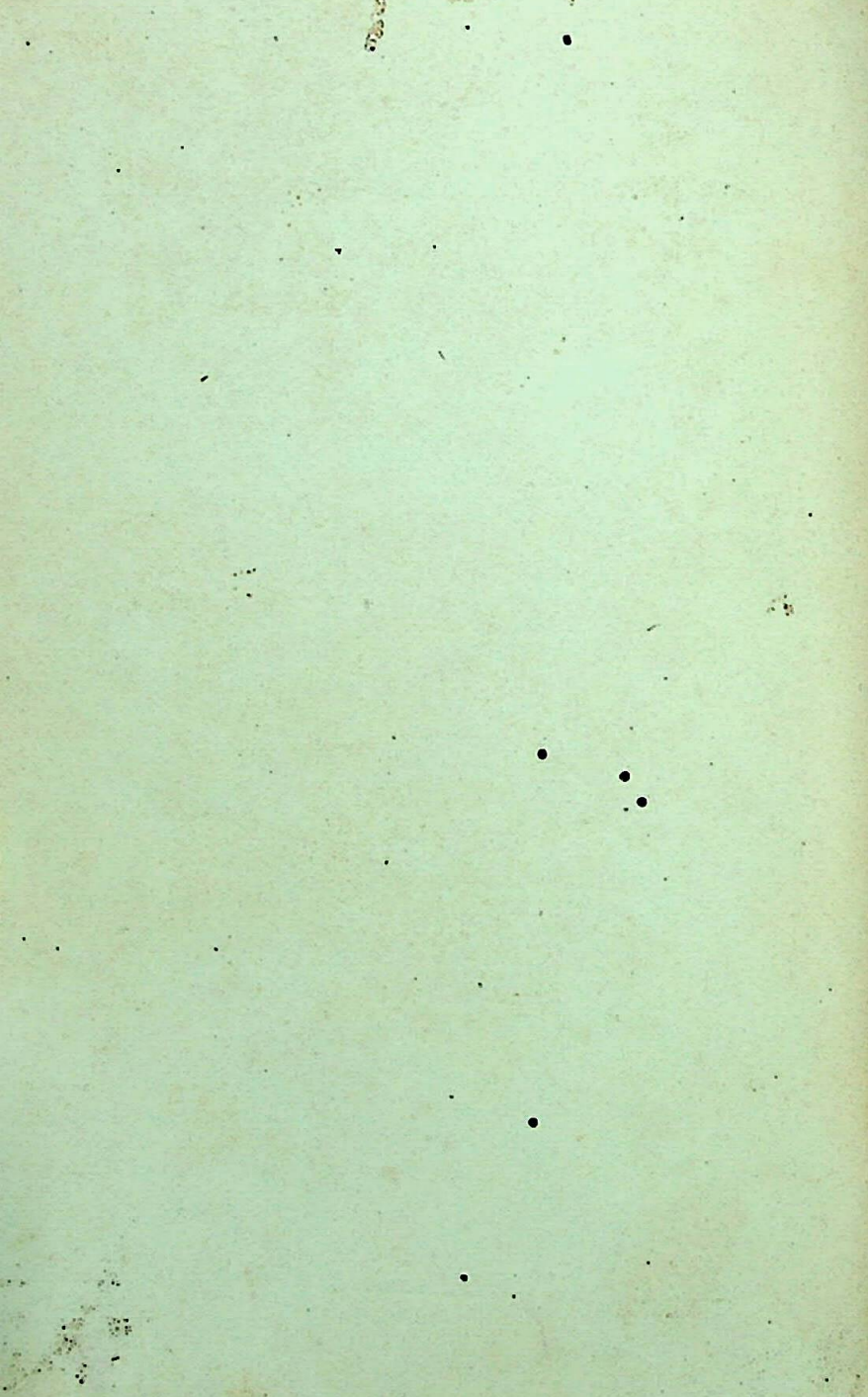
Secretary,

DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY,

P.O. Sivanandanagar, Rishikesh.







ANNOUNCEMENT

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the various aspects of the problem of the day. It is hoped that the meeting will be a most profitable one for all those who are interested in the subject. The meeting will be held at the Hotel New York, New York, on the 15th of the month.

The meeting will be held at the Hotel New York, New York, on the 15th of the month. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the various aspects of the problem of the day. It is hoped that the meeting will be a most profitable one for all those who are interested in the subject. The meeting will be held at the Hotel New York, New York, on the 15th of the month.

YOGI SIVANANDA

Kuppuswamy (as the Swami was known in his pre-Sannyasa days) was born on the 8th September, 1887. Piety, purity and knowledge of the scriptures, he had inherited from his forefathers, among whom many were renowned saints in their time. Buddha-like compassion and Christ-like spirit of selfless service and renunciation were his inborn traits. Desiring nothing for himself, he began to serve humanity very early in life.

After a decade of service as doctor in Malaya, Kuppuswamy renounced the world intent on serving it in a wider, deeper and more intense and more real way. He entered the Holy Order of Sannyasa in 1924, engaged himself in rigorous austerities and Yoga practice, attained illumination in 1930, after which he began spreading the Message of Yoga, the Message that at once heals the body, mind and soul. His compassion compelled him to found the Divine Life Society in 1936 and the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University in 1948. They propagate his teachings and broadcast his healing Message. The Message has reached all the countries of the world. Hundreds of European and American seekers and tourists have visited the Swami's "Abode of Bliss" on the bank of the Holy Ganges, and numberless seekers in the East and the West, have taken this great Yogi as their Preceptor and they pursue the Path of Yoga, with the help of his books and personal letters of guidance. Several of his books have been translated into a number of European languages like French, German, Spanish, Russian, and Danish.